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# THE LABOUR SAVING HOUSE

MRS. C. S. PEEL

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THE LABOUR-SAVING HOUSE

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*BY THE SAME AUTHOR*

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WAR RATION COOKERY (The Eat-less-meat Book)

LEARNING TO COOK

10/- A HEAD FOR HOUSE BOOKS

NOVELS

THE HAT SHOP

MRS. BARNET—ROBES

A MRS. JONES



PLATE 1



A FINE OLD RAEBURN MANTEL-PIECE AND FIRE-PLACE FITTED WITH A MODERN  
"DOG" GRATE AND GAS FIRE AND ALSO WITH GAS "CANDLE" STANDARDS



THE LABOUR-  
SAVING HOUSE  
BY MRS. C. S. PEEL



LONDON: JOHN LANE THE BODLEY HEAD  
NEW YORK: JOHN LANE COMPANY MCMXVIII

The greatest Labour-Saving apparatus which we possess is the Brain: it has not been worn out by too much use.

SECOND EDITION

Feb 12, 1921

THE LABOUR-SAVING  
MIND IN  
THE MIND

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## AUTHOR'S NOTE

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SOME portion of this book appeared in the form of articles in *The Queen* and *The Evening Standard*. My thanks are due to the Editors of those papers for permission to republish them.

DOROTHY C. PEEL.



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In almost every English house at least a third of each day is wasted in doing work which in no way adds to the comfort of its inmates.

## CHAPTER I

### WHAT THIS CHAPTER IS ABOUT

*Why Labour-Saving Houses are Needed*

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# THE LABOUR-SAVING HOUSE

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## CHAPTER I

### WHY LABOUR-SAVING HOUSES ARE NEEDED

**W**HY do we need Labour-Saving Houses ?  
Because :

- 1.—Life is too short and time too valuable to waste in doing work which is unnecessary and which adds little or nothing to our comfort.
- 2.—There is a scarcity of labour. Girls of the class from which domestic servants were drawn formerly now dislike service. The would-be employer finds it difficult to obtain servants and to keep them when obtained.
- 3.—Unless great changes are made in our houses and households it will become even more difficult to obtain servants, because so many professions are now open to

young women that they are in a position to choose how they will earn a living.

- 4.—When servants are not obtainable, the mistress is driven to turn to and do the work of her own house. That is why a demand for labour-saving mechanism is making itself felt.
- 5.—Owing to modern inventions, it is now possible to achieve a house in which a family may be housed and fed in comfort at half the cost of labour which is absorbed in the labour-making house.
- 6.—It is pleasanter to spend money on the things one likes than to squander it on unnecessary coals and kitchenmaids.

**House-keeping. Home-making.**

**What do these words mean ?**

They mean so much that is vital to the individual and to the nation that one could weep for the stupidity which permits any untrained and ill-educated girl to become a nurse, a cook, a house-maid, a mother, and the mistress of a home !

## CHAPTER II

### WHAT THIS CHAPTER IS ABOUT

*The Ignorant Employer—The Incompetent Servant — Wanted! a New Race of Mistresses—Domestic Training for all Girls — Its Value to the Nation—“Menial” Work—The Surplus of Governesses, Secretaries, and Companions, and the Scarcity of Servants—Genteel Professions—What the Servant Dislikes—How to Popularise Domestic Service.*

## CHAPTER II

THE SERVANT PROBLEM AND SOME SOLUTIONS  
OF IT

## I

“SERVANTS ? We haven’t a single-handed cook or a house-parlourmaid on our books, madam.”

This, in many cases, is the reply of the registry office to-day, and as time goes on the shortage of domestic workers will become more and more acute. Of highly-paid upper servants, with under-servants to wait upon them, there is no lack, for the supply of persons wishing to fill the few “plum” posts in any profession is always adequate ; but as there is a lack of under-servants, even the very rich find it difficult to secure a satisfactory household ; while the mistress who needs a house-parlourmaid, a single-handed cook, a “general,” or even a single-handed house- or parlourmaid finds it almost impossible to induce a suitable girl to accept her situation.

Why should this be ?

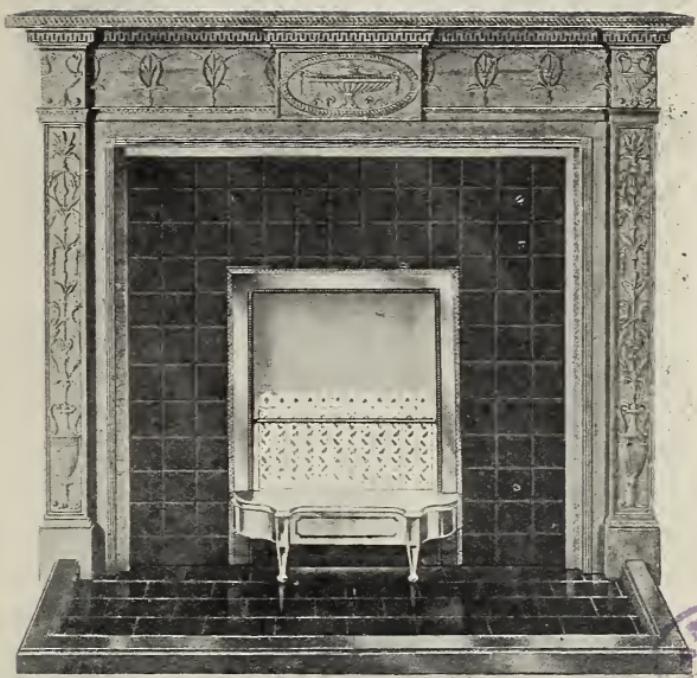
“ The war,” says every one. “ All the young women are busy conducting tramcars, selling bacon, and punching railway tickets.”

But why are all the young women anxious to be anything but domestic servants ?

As a matter of fact this dislike to service has not been brought about by the war ; it has been growing steadily for many years, and to a great extent employers have only themselves to thank for a state of affairs which they so bitterly deplore.

### The Ignorant Employer.

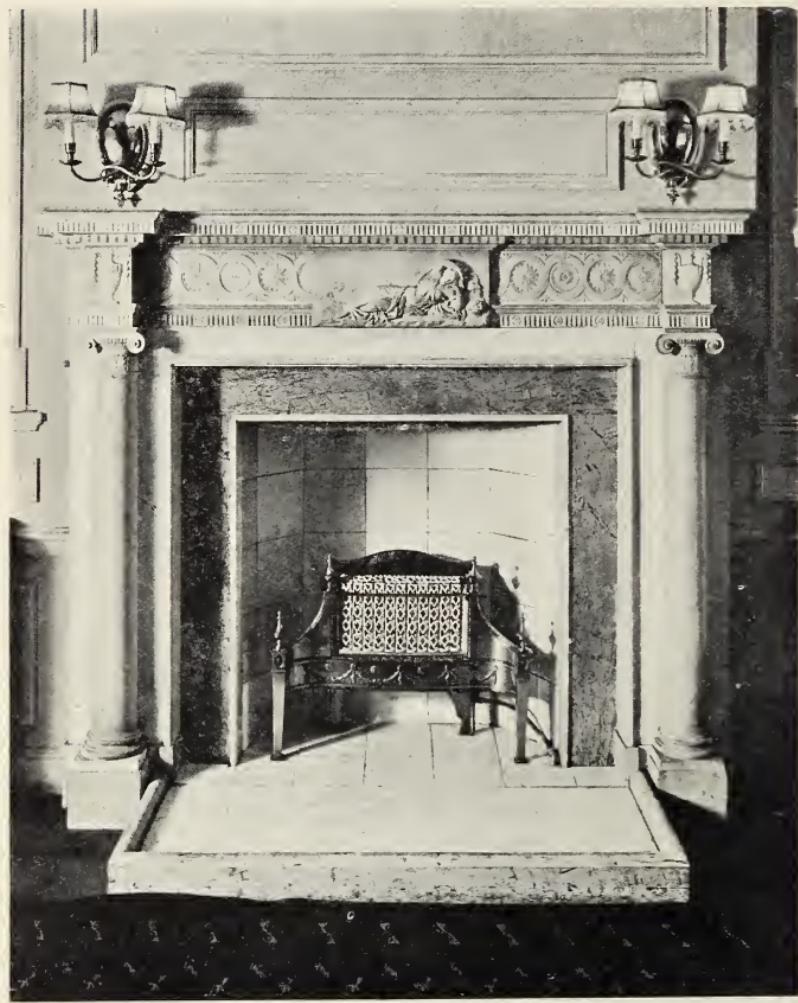
What sane person would undertake the management of a business knowing nothing of the conduct of it ? Yet this is what young women of the moneyed classes have done ever since it became the fashion to despise domesticity, to imagine that housekeeping was a pursuit fit only for women too stupid to do anything else. The girl marries : to her, cookery and household work are deep, dark mysteries. How do you clean silver ? How long does it take to turn out a bedroom ? Do you allow 2 lbs. or 12 lbs. of margarine per week for a household of six persons ? What is dripping ?



THE DAVIS "ADAM" GAS FIRE IN AN ADAM STYLE MANTEL.



PLATE III



AN "ADAM" DESIGN GAS DOG GRATE PLACED IN A FINE OLD FIRE-PLACE IN  
A LARGE HALL.

Note also the attractive gas candle brackets. (Richmond)

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The cook says soup cannot be made without soup meat. Can't it ? And what is soup meat ?

Imagine the annoyance of working under the control of such an employer !

Honest, competent servants become disheartened, the incompetent remain incompetent, while the ignorance of the mistress makes the temptation to be dishonest well-nigh irresistible. It is the ignorance of the mistress also that has enabled the perquisite and commission system (polite names for theft) to flourish, and which make it possible for tradesmen to employ men at low wages on the tacit understanding that a high wage may be gained by fleecing the customer.

### No Chance for the Incompetent Servant.

Again, had the servant-employers of this country a proper knowledge of their duties, the incompetent servant would have little chance to exist. She would have been taught her work, and if she would not do it, have been dismissed.

But nine times out of ten the mistress does not know how to teach, and is so dependent on her servants that she must keep anyone rather than be left servantless.

The result of our genteel dislike of "menial"

duties has not only encouraged dishonesty and incompetence in our servants, it has actually lessened the supply. The mistress who has never cleaned a room or cooked a dinner cannot realise the difficulties of either task. Hence it is that because domestic work generally has been done by paid servants, we have made but little effort to plan and furnish our houses in a labour-saving fashion. We have also failed to move with the times, and to realise that no matter if we approve or disapprove, young girls now demand more variety and more freedom in their lives than was formerly the case.

### Wanted! a New Race of Mistresses.

A race of competent, sympathetic mistresses might have made domestic service one of the most sought-after of the professions open to the average woman. They might have eliminated practically all the hard and dirty work of the house, they might have organised regular hours for exercise and recreation, and by their own example shown what war is now teaching us—the incalculable value to the nation of the good housekeeper. In their scorn of domestic duties Englishwomen have forgotten that the sole duty of the housewife is not

to know the price of mutton : it is her duty, and that of those who work with her, to bring up a race of decently behaved, clean, well-fed people, and to make of her home a place of peace and goodwill, a centre from which radiates a right influence.

Is this the work for the woman too stupid for aught else ? or is it the work of a true patriot ?

It is often said that the English govern their Government, and there is truth in the statement. The Press keeps its finger on the public pulse : when that shows signs of excitement, the Press acts, and between them, Public and Press set Parliament moving.

### Domestic Training for all Girls.

Possibly, in time, the serious lack of domestic labour will excite the Public and the Press to such a pitch that the Government will realise that every girl, no matter of what class, should be taught how to cook and to clean and to wash, tend and feed a young child, and not only be taught how to do these things, but impressed with the idea that in so doing she is as surely performing her duty to her country as are the soldier, sailor, doctor, scientist, or merchant.

But the fact that you teach girls these things

will not cause them to become servants, you object.

I am by no means sure that you are right. When all girls have been through a course of domestic training, and when they have been impressed with the national importance of such work, they will regard it from a point of view different from that which now obtains.

The girl who becomes the employer will know what she is asking of her employée ; she will realise that to labour indoors from 6.30 or 7 to 10 or 10.30 five days a week is not attractive to a young girl. The work may not be continuous : there will be half-hours of rest and talk with the other maids ; but the fact remains that the servant is on duty and liable to be called upon at any time during those hours.

The mistress, who has been a worker, will also realise how hard and disagreeable are some of the tasks required of the servant in a labour-making home.

On the other hand, the servant will know that she cannot take advantage of the ignorance of her employer and that her employer is not demanding of her work which she herself regards as derogatory. The maid, too, will start knowing her work : she

will not have to pick it up as best she can, often from persons knowing little more than herself. The life of many young servants is made almost unendurable because they have to struggle along as best they may, scolded by mistress and upper-servant alike for not knowing what they have had no opportunity to learn. A child in a fairly well-to-do working home, whose mother has been a servant, goes out to service with some knowledge of her work, but as a rule the conditions in cottages and town workers' dwellings are so utterly different from those in the homes of the well-to-do that the young girl can scarcely be blamed when she breaks and spoils and makes more dust and muddle than she clears away.

### Domestic Training will improve the Physique of the Coming Generation.

A three or four months' course of intelligent domestic training would do much, not only to solve the servant problem, but to improve the physique of the coming generation, for it is sheer ignorance of domesticity which accounts for a high percentage of the infant mortality which is a disgrace to this country. And this ignorance of the importance of cleanliness, sanitation, etc., is not

confined to the poorer classes. Fashions filter downwards, and when the educated women of the upper classes show that they consider household work beneath their attention, why should they think it strange when they find the same opinion expressed by the working-girl ?

Ignorance of the national value of "menial work" is one reason for the unpopularity of domestic service.

This attitude is not confined to the uneducated —only to the unthinking.





THIS ILLUSTRATION SHOWS HOW MODERN COAL GRATES IN BEDROOMS CAN BE  
FITTED WITH GAS FIRES WITHOUT MAKING STRUCTURAL ALTERATIONS  
This type of gas fire can be fitted in almost any shape or size of coal grates ; its  
initial cost, as well as cost of fitting, is extremely low. (Fletcher Russell)



A LONDON DINING-ROOM SHOWING DRAWING-ROOM BEYOND  
This picture shows how a gas fire may be fixed in an antique grate without disturbing the old fire-place. When alight the effect is of red-hot coke.

## II

## Menial Work.

The wide dislike of menial work which exists was brought before me vividly a short time ago.

A secretary was advertised for, an educated, quick, methodical worker—good typist and shorthandist. The lady who needed the secretary almost required one to deal with the letters she received in reply to her advertisement.\*

A holiday nursery governess was advertised for: again with the same result. Women with every qualification were anxious—desperately anxious—to obtain the post. These educated women sent stamped envelopes for a reply and offered to come long distances to secure an interview.

A cook at £30 a year (single-handed) was advertised for over and over again. Registry offices were haunted, friends worried, for tidings of cooks. No cooks were forthcoming. Here was a situation where the two maids had a roomy comfortable bedroom and their own bathroom,

\* This incident occurred in the early part of 1915.

a sitting-room with a gas fire and every labour-saving apparatus to make the work easy.

These servants were offered not less than 10s. a week wages, as much good food as they could eat, clean, sanitary quarters, with comfortable beds and hot baths galore. Their washing was paid, an off-day, from 3.30 to 10, once a week, and the same on alternate Sundays, and two weeks' holiday (on full pay) granted, in addition to as many other outings as could be arranged.

Had suitable applicants appeared and demanded £30 or £34 a year, they would have obtained those wages.

### Too many Governesses, Secretaries, and Companions in Normal Times.

And yet there is a glut of women who wish to become governesses, secretaries, companions, and shop-assistants, in spite of the fact that such work is not well paid, that it is uncertain, and that those girls who must take lodgings or "live in" are generally badly housed and badly fed. Except in a few shops, girls living "in" live very roughly. Nurses in the generality of nursing-homes do the same, and women workers who earn under 30s. a week and live in a bed-sitting-room in a lodging-

---

house are in no better case, though the latter do have the luxury of a room to themselves. In many houses, however, this luxury could be granted to the servants.

The life of a servant in a good situation is healthy ; she can enjoy cleanliness, good food, and warmth, she can take her pick of situations, and leave one which is undesirable, knowing full well that she can obtain another for the asking. A girl earning good wages in service can save, and she is not dogged by the terror of being suddenly thrown out of employment and finding herself penniless and unable to obtain another post.

So much for the advantages of domestic service as a profession. What are its drawbacks ?

Lack of freedom and the fact that the profession of a servant is not considered genteel ! The girl who adopts it does not rank as a "young lady."

### Service is not a Genteel Profession !

Is it not time that we ceased to cherish such vulgar ideas ?

War, tragic and terrible, is bringing home to us the fact that we should honour the women who can and will work, and despise those who exist

merely as parasites on the labour of their fellow-beings.

The educated woman who desires to earn her living has a great chance before her. Let her do for the domestic worker what an earlier generation of women did for the sick-nurse. As domestic workers, educated women will be of incalculable value to the nation, and they can secure for themselves well-paid, healthy work under reformed conditions.

### Domestic Training Colleges.

To bring about this change, first of all we need to establish domestic training colleges, run on somewhat the same lines as the Norland Nurses' Institute, where girls of good education may learn their work and obtain certificates and character sheets. These institutions should provide accommodation for members on holiday or when changing their situations. They should also demand for their members a fixed scale of wages, a reasonable standard of food and accommodation, and free time. The workers should wear the uniform of the institution. Well-trained girls could demand high wages, and employers could afford to give them to conscientious, capable workers, who

would neither break nor spoil nor waste, and who would disdain to practise the small dishonesties by which the servant often augments her wages.

But if the educated woman worker is ready to do her part in the scheme, her prospective employer must realise that she, too, has a duty to perform. It rests with her so to arrange the work of her household that the positions she has to offer shall appear desirable to the class of woman she desires to employ.

### What the Servant Dislikes.

To sum up the situation, the scarcity of domestic servants is accounted for by the dislike of girls who have to earn a living for a life which entails long hours, little freedom, and which carries with it something of social stigma.

The shop-girl, the clerk, the tea-room waitress are "*young ladies*."

They are known as Miss Jones or Miss Smith. The servant is a servant, a "slavey," a "skivvy," a "Mary Jane." A young man of the superior working class prefers to walk out with a young lady, and the servant knows this and resents it. Even if a girl goes into a factory, she may work harder than the servant and in many cases under less

pleasant conditions, but she is free in the evening, on Saturday afternoon, and on Sunday, and she lives amongst her equals. She does not inhabit "servants' bedrooms," and eat "kitchen butter," and drink "kitchen tea." The tea that she does drink may be inferior, but at all events it is as good as that consumed by other members of her world.

And all these things matter, though the average employer likes to believe that they do not.

### To Popularise Domestic Service.

So to make domestic service popular we must make it fashionable. It should be as fashionable to be a domestic servant as to become a hospital nurse.

Alter the conditions of domestic service until the profession of domestic worker attracts the educated woman, and the problem is solved.

“ Go into Service ! Not I ! ”

That is what young girls say.

“ I don’t know what to do, I cannot get servants.”

That is what the employer says.

What is she doing to make domestic service an attractive profession to the young girl ?



## III

Study the psychology of the question, find out what it is young women want of life. Be progressive. Do not say, "Because it was, it ever shall be." Thank God, things do not stay as they were, or we might still be working little children eighteen hours a day in factories, starving and whipping lunatics, and burning witches.

Having realised that it is the human attitude which is of first importance, then let us go on to see by what means we can lighten the work of our households so that we may make service attractive.

We can solve the domestic problem—

- 1.—By becoming entirely, or partly, our own servants.
- 2.—By employing outside workers, who should be trained, uniformed, and paid at a fixed rate per hour.
- 3.—By changing the conditions until domestic service becomes as attractive to the worker as any other profession open to the woman of average ability and education.

Other changes can be made : indeed, it is certain that sooner or later they must be made unless we are to go servantless. When the necessary alteration of mental attitude towards the subject is achieved, the next thing to be done is to call to our aid all the labour-saving devices which are available, for it is by making full use of them that we can eliminate the hard and disagreeable work from houses and make the profession of a domestic worker attractive to an educated woman.

In the industrial world it is now realised that to obtain the best results the worker must be saved all unnecessary fatigue, and that the mental atmosphere in which he works must be as free from strain and anxiety as possible, for it is found that the labour of an over-tired worker becomes practically worthless.

It is time we applied modern methods to the working of our households, in which they are needed as much as in the office or the factory.

“ They build these 'ouses,” said Ann, “ as though  
girls wasn’t 'uman beings. . . .

“ It’s 'ouses like this wears girls out.”

**KIPPS.**

## CHAPTER III

### WHAT THIS CHAPTER IS ABOUT

*The House that Jack builds without the help of Jane—A Hot and Cold Water Service—What happens when you do away with Coal—How to Save a Third of your Household Work—Light and Air—Kitchens and Offices—Service-rooms—Furniture and Decoration—Bathrooms and Washing-rooms—Some Labour-Saving Details.*

## CHAPTER III

## THE LABOUR-SAVING HOUSE AS IT MIGHT BE

## I

THE other day I was re-reading that delightful story of a simple soul, *Kipps*, and was struck anew by the truth of the difficulties which beset Artie and Ann when they went house-hunting.

“ ‘They build these ‘ouses,’ said Ann, ‘as though girls wasn’t ‘uman beings. . . . There’s kitchen stairs to go up, Artie. . . . Some poor girl’s got to go up and down, up and down, and be tired out, jest because they haven’t the sense to leave enough space to give their steps a proper rise; and no water upstairs anywhere—every drop got to be carried! It’s ‘ouses like this wear girls out.

“ ‘It’s ‘aving ‘ouses built by men, I believe, makes all the work and trouble. . . .’

“ The Kipps, you see, thought they were looking for a reasonably simple little contemporary house, but indeed they were looking either for dreamland or 1975 A.D., or thereabouts, and it hadn’t come.”

## The House that Jack Built.

I am inclined to agree with Ann in thinking that having houses built by men makes at least a great part of all the work and trouble, for my own experiences—somewhat limited, I admit—of architects point to the fact that they are concerned to provide you with a house which looks charming and which may be stoutly built, but that such details as the make of the bath, the size of the service lift, the position of the kitchen range, and the arrangements for cupboards, housemaid's pantries, and so forth, concern them not at all.

When rebuilding a house for ourselves it was left to me to suggest a service lift, and I was only by a happy chance in time to prevent it being of such an absurd size that no good-sized joint on a dish to correspond, or a coal scuttle, could have been put into it !

I also had to point out that to arrange for all the hot-water pipes to pass through the larder seemed scarcely advisable, and that a box-room in which all the boxes were to be stacked one upon the other was not quite as labour-saving as one fitted with strong, cheap slatted shelves on which the boxes could stand in tiers and be removed one at a time as required with ease and dispatch.

Men, as a general rule, do not have to keep house, neither do they have to do house-work, thus it is not surprising that such details as these escape their notice.

### Women Architects.

For that reason every architect, if he be a man, should number a clever, resourceful, and experienced woman amongst his staff. Or why should not the architect be a woman ?

Before discoursing of the labour-saving house as it might be, it is well to state that I am well aware that one man's meat is another man's poison, also that, owing to the fact that gas and electricity are not always available in the country, the labour-saving house must, more often than not, be in a town or a suburb. Still, much may be done with the country house, even the small country house, and after all we move quickly nowadays, and soon it may be possible to obtain gas and electric current everywhere.

### A Hot and Cold Water Service.

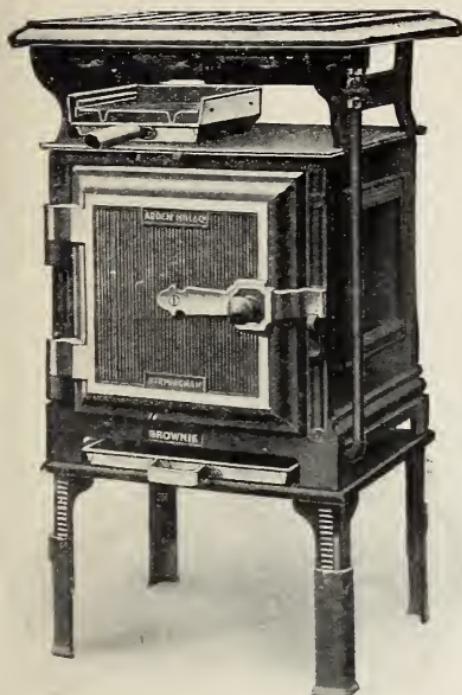
Another point which strikes me when coming to consider my labour-saving house is this. Why do not the Water Companies supply us with a Hot

Water Service on much the same terms as they now supply us with a Cold Water Service ?

Let us try and realise what this would mean to the householder. His home would be fitted with radiators and warmed by hot water. He would turn the radiators on and off as he needed them. He would turn a tap and hot water would be at his command at any hour, day and night, for baths, washing-up, and cooking. He would turn another tap and cold water would gush forth.

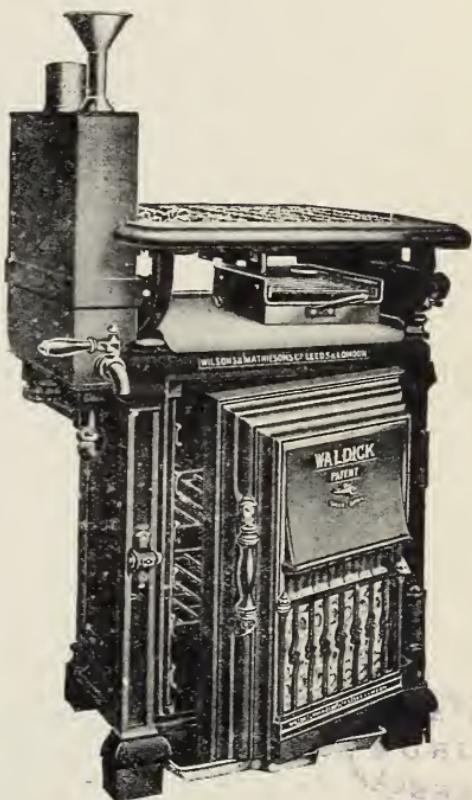
Imagine the economy of such an arrangement ! Instead of millions of stoves heating water, there would be a few large furnaces doing the work. Imagine, too, the difference in the atmosphere when you eliminate coal from all dwelling-houses. The house is heated and provided with hot and cold water on every floor, in every room if you like, with no more trouble to yourself than turning a tap and paying the bill. When you do not have to cook water in addition to food you need far less fuel, and for this purpose electricity or gas are at your disposal. If you feel lonely when sitting in a room warmed by a radiator, you may have a small wood fire, and this, I admit, labour-saving faddist that I am, I should desire in one or two sitting-rooms.

PLATE VI



THE "BROWNIE" IS THE IDEAL COOKER  
For use where space is limited, or where  
the requirements of the family are small.  
The oven is fitted with one grid and one  
browning shelf.

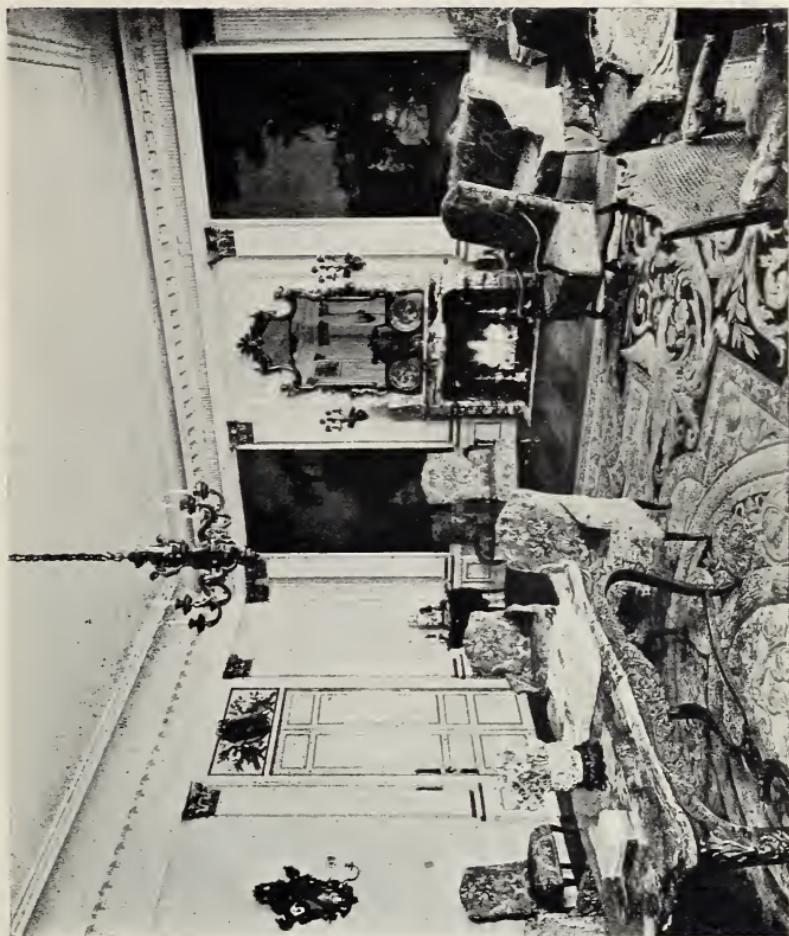
PLATE VIa



THE "WALDICK" COOKER  
Combines a cooker, gas fire, and water boiler. All parts  
of the stove are under separate control. Where hot  
water is available by other means the "Waldick" can  
be supplied without the side boiler. The gas fire in the  
oven door is always supplied with this cooker, as shown  
above. This stove is specially designed for use in flats,  
and other places where there is limited space. (Wilson)



A DINING-ROOM WITH A GAS FIRE AND GAS "CANDLE" BRACKETS



A WELL-KNOWN LONDON DRAWING-ROOM SHOWING A GAS-HEATED "LOG FIRE"

PLATE IX



A GAS FIRE IN THE ENTRANCE HALL OF A SMALL TOWN HOUSE

When by turning a tap or a switch, water, gas and electricity become our servants, we shall have done much to solve the Servant Problem.



## II

But in the ideal labour-saving house (ideal, mark you, from a labour-saving point of view), there are no fires, no chimneys, no grates, no coal-devouring, dirt-making range, always requiring coal and yet more coal and returning you evil for good in the shape of soot and dirt.

Have you ever watched a sweep at work ? Have you ever cleaned the flues of a coal range ?

In our dream-house we have no such horrors. We save the cost of chimneys, sweeps, grates, fenders, fireirons, coal-boxes. We need not provide coal cellars, in which a cold, cross, sleepy girl must grovel in the early morn before the house can be warmed and the breakfast cooked.

Make a mental picture of all the heavy coal-boxes which are dragged up steep stairs in this country of ours.

Ann was right when she said, " It's 'ouses like this wears girls out."

**Save a Third of the Work in the House.**

Eliminate coal and you save quite a third of the work in your home. Think this out and you will see that it is so. Coal must be delivered. In a town it is shot through a hole into the basement cellar or cellars. This causes a cloud of black dirt, and the front of your house suffers. Then coal must be shovelled up into scuttles; often it is necessary to break up the large lumps. The scuttles are then carried about the house, coals up, ashes down; grates are cleaned and the room is powdered with dust in the process. Grates, fenders, fireirons, and coal-boxes must be cleaned, and fashion ordains that they are generally made, wholly or partly, of polished metal. The weather is cold and a servant is rung for and more coal is demanded. One day the wind blows and the fire will not light. It takes some fifteen minutes of bellows-blowing and two bundles of wood to set it going, and then the wind blows harder and it smokes! Alas for the poor housemaid! The kitchen fire won't draw and the water is not hot. The sweep must be sent for, and all the while the air is being fouled from the smoke from our own chimneys, and when we open our windows the coal we burn returns to us in the shape of smuts and grime.

Oh, the washing bill, the cleaner's bill ! The bill for labour which might be saved !

So in our ideal home we do away with all this pother, and wash and warm ourselves by means of hot water which comes from the main and the supply of which we regulate by turning taps. We light our house and cook our food by means of electricity or gas, which we also regulate by turning switches or taps. Thus we obtain heat and artificial light.



When Labour was cheap and plentiful, the Labour-Making House caused but little inconvenience except to those who had to do the work, and their point of view was seldom considered.

Now that Labour is scarce and dear, the matter assumes a different complexion.



## III

But our house must be well supplied with natural light, for without light and air we cannot live.

Away, then, with basements. There must be ample space between the rows of houses so that every room may be light, that the sun may penetrate into it, and therefore the windows must be large.

### Kitchens and Offices.

These, too, must be light and airy. The kitchen should not be used as a sitting-room ; it is the place in which food is prepared, and should be a place which can be kept exquisitely clean. It should have tiled walls and ceiling, a cemented floor on a slight slant with a gutter, so that it may be washed down with a hose. The larder and pantry should be arranged in a like fashion. The larder must be cool, well ventilated, and the food stored in it protected from dust and dirt. In our ideal home, both cook and mistress know something of the work of dust and flies as disease carriers.

In this kitchen the cooker is placed in a good light and is mounted at a convenient height. Only the cook knows the fatigue occasioned by stooping to lift heavy weights out of low-set ovens, the worry of cooking in a bad light.

The sink, too, shall be set at a reasonable height. There shall not be a scullery—why should there be a scullery? It is merely one more place to clean.

Then we will not condemn any girl or woman to stand for hours washing up. The electrically worked washing-up machine does such work well and quickly, and our pots and pans when electricity or even gas is used do not become black and sooty on the outside.

In the ideal kitchen we will have as few utensils as possible, and these shall have their proper keeping places.

### A Service-room.

In addition to kitchen and larder we will have a "service-room," fitted with cupboards for linen, blankets, pillows, etc., for boxes, for china and glass. Here flowers may be done, clothes brushed, and half a hundred domestic jobs performed. Here there may be a hot-airing cupboard, a place in which to wash and iron.

Tiled walls and ceiling, varnished wood, linoleum-covered floor, tables covered with American cloth nailed tight or faced with zinc are quickly and easily cleaned.

In addition there must be a maids' sitting-room, light, bright, sparsely but comfortably furnished, with linoleum-covered floor and small, light rugs which may be shaken easily.

And in a convenient place, so that it may be fed from kitchen and pantry, there must be the service lift.

Here we have such domestic premises as are suitable in a house where three or more servants will be employed.

The large household will need a housekeeper's room, a sitting-room for the housemaids, a dining-hall, but in this book such households cannot be considered. On the other hand, the one or two-servant house or flat may be differently planned. Here pantry, sitting-room, and service-room might be combined, and this suggestion is dealt with in another chapter ; while in the no-servant home, or that in which some of the work is done by the visiting domestic worker, a sitting-room is not needed, and kitchen and pantry may be combined. A small service-room, however, I would not omit

in a house where there are spare bedding, china, linen, boxes, and so forth to be stowed away; and a house in which there is no place to do odd jobs cannot be an ideal home.

### Furniture and Decoration.

The furnishing and decoration of a house must be left to individual taste: one person revels in colouring which would make another ill, but when we consider the matter from a labour-saving point of view, we should forbid painted woodwork. Natural wood should be used and mouldings forbidden. Who does not know the lines of dirt which form on the mouldings in which the builder delights? The wainscots, the window-frames, the doors, all are trimmed with mouldings. Fitted carpets, or, indeed, any heavy carpets, should be taboo. Parquet floors are delightful, but in most places linoleum must be the floor covering because it keeps out draughts, is easily kept clean, and is comparatively cheap.

Furniture which cannot be moved without difficulty or swept under is objectionable: double beds are tiring for one person to make, and wash-handstands can be omitted if there are a suitable number of washing-rooms. These are preferable,

I think, to fitted washstands in the bedrooms. In the average house three washing-rooms would be required, one for husband and wife, one for the children, and one for the servants. When spare rooms are required each bedroom and dressing-room should have its washing-room.

You may say that so many bathrooms absorb much space and cost so much more.

#### A Clever Idea for a Bedroom and Dressing-room Bath.

This idea has been carried out in a small country house known to me.

Here the spare bedroom and dressing-room are 16 feet wide. Where the dividing wall would come a fitted washstand has been arranged in either room, back to back. The washstands jut out 1 foot 8 inches into either room, and are 3 feet long, leaving, if you draw a straight line to either side wall, and allowing for a partition wall, a space 3 feet 8 inches wide and 10 feet long. This space is enclosed on either side by sliding doors, fitted with bolts, and inside it a porcelain enamel bath is fitted. There is a ventilating window at the outer wall, and that piece of wall is tiled as is the floor.

A large-sized bath measures some 30 inches

across the widest end, and is 6 feet long. A small bath measures some 28 inches by 5 feet, so if the rooms were small and a small bath chosen a lesser space would be necessary for the bathroom, and part of the length might be used for wardrobe cupboards.

In this house the water and the radiators are heated by a coke furnace, the house is lighted by acetylene gas, and the cooking is done by coal, and the cooker is so arranged that it heats servants' hall as well as kitchen.

In a labour-saving house all rooms should be under rather than over furnished, and free of heavy, stuffy draperies. There should be a gas ring or electric heater in each room or on each floor, so that in the case of illness food can be prepared. Hot water there will always be, day and night.

What are the domestic tasks which women most dislike?

Getting coals out of the coal cellar.

Cleaning grates and flues.

Carrying heavy trays, cans, and coal-boxes up and down stairs.

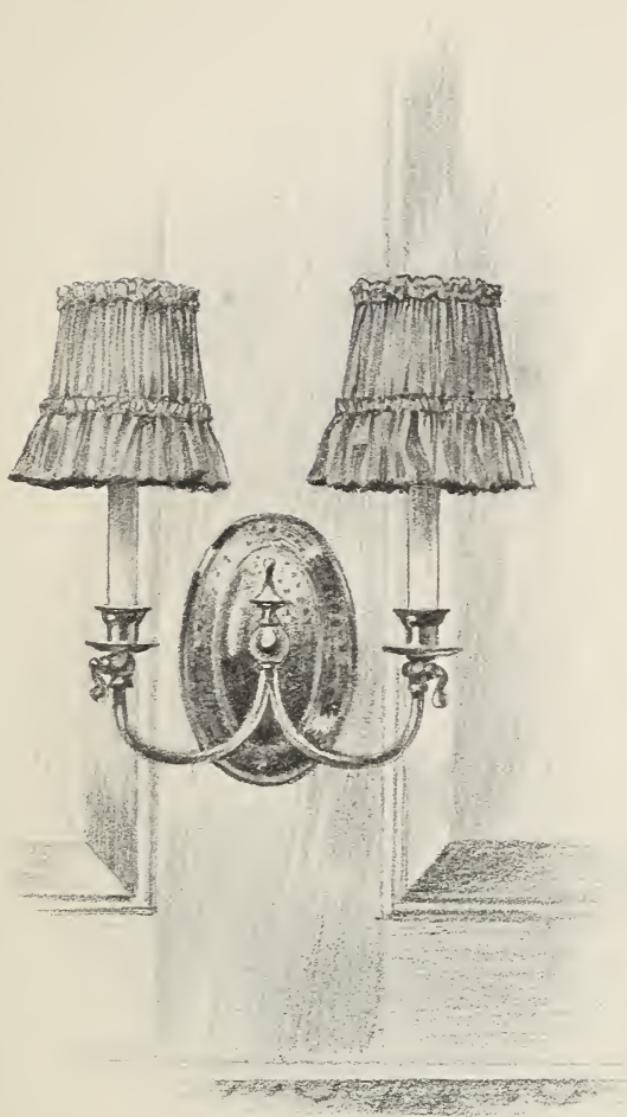
Cleaning doorsteps.

Doing washstand work.

Then why continue to perform them?

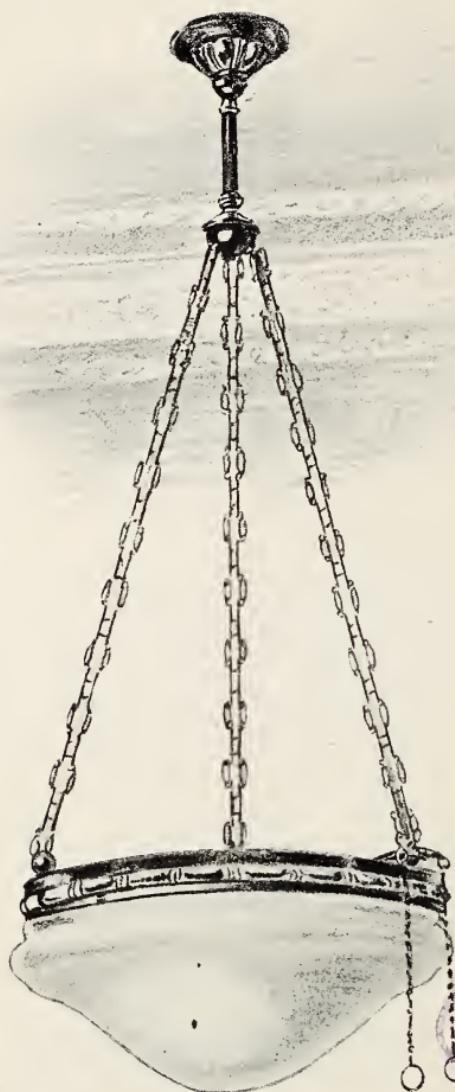


PLATE X

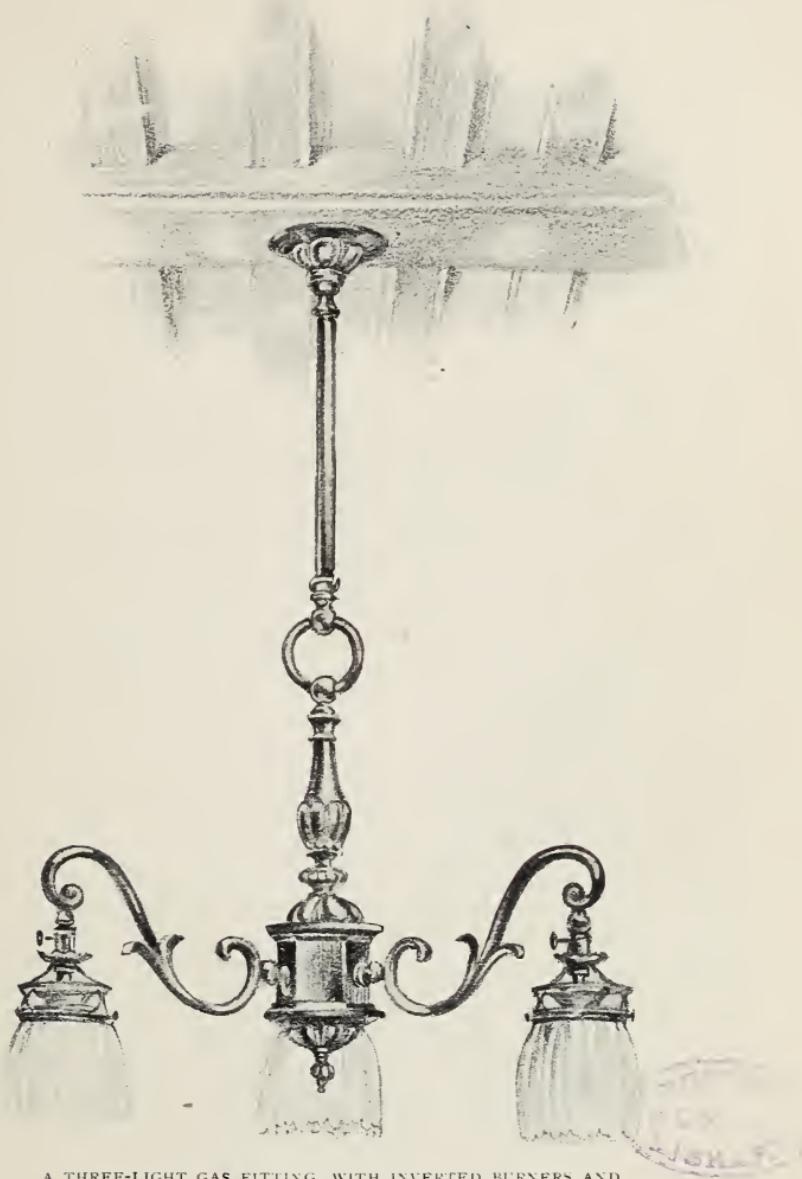


A CHARMING TWO-LIGHT GAS CANDLE BRACKET IN WROUGHT IRON (EVERED)

PLATE XI



A MODERN INDIRECT GAS LIGHTING "BOWL" PENDANT. (EVERED)



A THREE-LIGHT GAS FITTING, WITH INVERTED BURNERS AND  
SHADES SUCH AS ENSURE A PLEASING LIGHT

The switch systems, now readily adaptable to gas lighting, enable the burners to be lighted and extinguished by the mere pressing of a button. (Evered)



COMPOSITE GAS COOKER (3 INDEPENDENT OVENS AND HOT PLATE). SUITABLE FOR A LARGE HOUSEHOLD WHERE THE AMOUNT OF COOKING VARIES VERY MUCH

11  
LISBARD

## IV

Of polished metal there should be a minimum, and glass rather than silver should be chosen for table use. Stainless steel knives take the place of those which need cleaning. The meals should be simplified as much as possible. Earthenware casseroles in which the food is cooked and served save washing up. Rotary brushes by which boot and other cleaning may be carried out are worked by electricity. Linoleum with rubber treads is substituted for stair carpets whenever possible, in order to save carpet beating and the cost of stair-rods. The use of a suction cleaner, Bissel carpet sweeper, long-handled scrubbing brushes and mops, telephone bells, an electric "not at home" indicator on the front door, a polished dining-table, glass tops to sideboard, side, and dressing-tables will all reduce the labour bill. It is also important that each person in the house should refrain from making unnecessary work for the others, for to tidy up after an untidy person absorbs far more time than is often realised.

But, alas ! such a home as I have described is not within the reach of many people. Like the Kipps, we are looking for Dreamland or 1975, and it has not come. Still, there are people who build houses and there are more people who rebuild houses, and large numbers who do up houses, and if one cannot do all one would like, it is generally possible to achieve some of one's ambitions.

**It is not the work but the spirit in which it is  
done that degrades.**

## CHAPTER IV

### WHAT THIS CHAPTER IS ABOUT

*The Basement House—Good Neighbourhoods and Dying Neighbourhoods—A Typical Labour-Making House—A Labour-Making House Converted—Another Suggestion for a Labour-Saving House—Fitting and Furnishing.*

## CHAPTER IV

## THE LABOUR-SAVING HOUSE AS IT CAN BE

## I

**I**T was an Irishman who advised, "If ye can't be aisy, be as aisy as ye can," and his advice was good.

Thus, if you cannot have an ideal house, have a home which is as nearly ideal as possible, so let us consider the house as we generally find it, and see what can be done to improve it.

Most houses built prior to the last ten years seem to have been planned with the express desire of providing an unnecessary amount of hard work for the unfortunate persons who inhabit them. Fifty years ago labour was cheap and plentiful, and ideas as to hygiene stranger even than many which still obtain. Now, however, we do know that fresh air and light are as necessary to our well-being as sound food. This fact is shown in an interesting fashion in Mrs. Pember Reeves' admirable book, "Round About a Pound a Week," in which she

speaks eloquently of the way in which “basement families” deteriorate in health, although the children may have more food than those who live in higher, airier quarters.

### Basement Houses.

Ignorance of the value of light and air, cheap labour and dear land were no doubt the causes of basement houses, and to this day, although labour is dear and the cost of feeding and keeping each servant has increased, it is no uncommon thing for a housekeeper to remark, “I have to keep an extra servant because of the basement,” and perhaps another maid is employed because of the coals and stairs.

Where the income is ample, the extra labour bill is of little importance (speaking from the employer’s point of view), but householders of moderate and small means are rapidly discovering that labour-making houses are not for them ; that it is an economy to pay, if needs be, a rather higher rent and to live in a healthy, light, airy house, so planned that all unnecessary toil is abolished, and with it the cost of much cleaning material, chimney-sweeping, whitewashing, etc.

In many cases, landlords have found it impossible

to let their gloomy, inconvenient dwellings to tenants of the desired kind, and what was a "good neighbourhood" has sunk by degrees until the houses are inhabited by members of that unfortunate class who are forced to take any rooms they can obtain, and only too often pay a high price for bad accommodation. I am not in a position to advise on the management of house property, but I cannot but think that in many cases it would pay the owners to modernise the houses they have to let rather than let them deteriorate.

As I write, I have in my mind's eye a certain neighbourhood in London, once fashionable, now inhabited by "nice" people, whose means make it impossible for them to pay high rents. But this neighbourhood is slowly but surely deteriorating, and rents are sinking, simply because the houses are of a kind that necessitate at least three servants being employed, in addition to a nurse if there are young children. With less than three servants these houses could not be kept clean or warm.

#### A Typical Labour-Making House.

The accommodation in most of these streets and squares consists of :

*Basement* (deep and rather dark).—*Kitchen*,

pantry, servants' hall at back (generally very dark), lavatory, coal and wine cellars ; front area (dust-bin stands here), backyard ; steep and dark stairs to ground floor.

*Ground Floor*.—Dining-room, smoking-room, and third small dark room, lavatory, narrow hall, and steep stairs leading to small half-landing.

*First Floor*.—Double drawing-room. Above, seven bedrooms, one lavatory, and one bathroom.

All coal for the house must be carried up one, two, or three, and possibly four, flights of steep stairs.

There is a large kitchen range, with flues to clean twice a week, as in order to keep up the hot-water supply much coal is burned, and the flues become very dirty.

The chimney must also be swept every two months. Other chimneys must be swept twice a year ; if much used, three times a year. All food and table utensils must be carried up and downstairs three times a day, and when lunch and dinner are in progress a servant must run up and down with clean and dirty dishes, etc.

Washstands are used in each bedroom, and hot water taken to these rooms three or four times a day. There is but one bathroom and upstairs

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lavatory ; therefore there is a good deal of stair work when doing the rooms. If there is a nursery, the nursery meals have to be carried up and down.

Each time the hall-door bell rings, a maid must run upstairs to answer it, and visitors and tea in the drawing-room necessitate more journeys up and down, and the carrying of a heavy tray.

Now, with a house of this description there are certainly two ways of converting it into a labour-saving dwelling.

### A Labour-Making House Converted.

If the basement is deep and incurably dark, by far the best plan is to dispense with it altogether so far as living-rooms are concerned, using it merely for cellars and box-room.

“ But,” says the householder, “ there will now be no back door. The tradesmen will all have to come to the front door.” They will. But tradesmen call chiefly in the morning, and the few who come in the afternoon might be instructed to go to the area door, to which the dustman would also go, while the coals (if any are used) would be delivered through the pavement coal-shoot as before.

Arranging thus, the house proper begins on the ground floor. The large front room is the dining-

room as before, and the double doors between it and the erstwhile smoking-room should be plastered up on the smoking-room side, for under the new arrangement the smoking-room becomes the kitchen, and the small third room the pantry. The kitchen will not be large, but neither a gas nor an electric cooker takes up much space.

Now comes the question whether the hot-water system shall be worked by a coke or a gas circulator. The latter gives even less trouble than the former, but it may prove too costly in use. A coke furnace needs to be stoked about three times a day, and is very easy to light. The furnace might be placed in the kitchen or in the basement, and in it can be burned practically all the rubbish, thus doing away with that otherwise nasty necessity the dustbin, which in many parts of London the authorities refuse to empty more than once a week.

Kitchen and pantry must be fitted with sinks, and there should be a little gas fire, work-table, and armchair in the pantry for the use of the house-parlourmaid.

Make your head save your hands.  
This has been said millions of times, but there  
is still need to go on saying it.



## II

Two servants can easily do the work of a house such as this will become, and the kitchen premises are only suitable for two servants. Extra help, however, can always be employed in times of stress. In order that two women may keep the house in thorough order, gas fires should be used in all rooms other than perhaps the drawing-room and the nursery, though now that gas fires have been brought to such a state of perfection I can see no reason why there should not be gas in the nurseries. The double drawing-room must be made into drawing-room and smoking-room, thus leaving seven bedrooms as before, or it may suit the family to keep the double drawing-room, and make an upstairs smoking-room.

Personally I should use the first floor front room as drawing-room, and open the doors into the smoking-room when more space was needed, thus leaving best bed and dressing-room, two nurseries, one servants' room, and one spare room, and a small room to be used as linen and dress room.

(Boxes could be stored in the empty basement.) Add to the house a second bathroom and lavatory, telephone bells ; use the bathroom basins rather than the bedroom washstands (and when a bathroom can be set apart for Monsieur and Madame, and another for nursery and maids, this is scarcely a hardship), and you now have a house which, provided it is not crammed with furniture, stuffy carpets, and draperies, can be perfectly kept by two good servants, always supposing that the nurse does not demand too much waiting on.

### Nurse and Nursery.

If this important person has a bathroom conveniently situated, gas fires, a gas ring for heating kettles, irons, etc., and a cupboard containing her own stock of crockery, she should give very little trouble to the house-parlourmaid. If advisable, a charwoman one day a week could turn out the nurseries, tidy the front area and backyard, clean the stairs and bathrooms.

Arranging the house thus, the following work is saved : Cleaning of kitchen range and flues, carrying of coal all over house, running up and down-stairs to answer front door, especially in morning, when the cook is busy, carrying of trays from base-

ment, cleaning and filling coal scuttles, cleaning grates and fireirons, much carrying of hot water and bedroom work, entire cleaning of basement.

If a coke furnace is used, coke is light to carry and clean to handle, and should a buttery hatch be arranged between dining-room and kitchen, one maid (if well trained) can wait on six or eight persons quite satisfactorily. Then when a little dinner is given, a charwoman, at one shilling and her supper, to help wash up, is the only outside help which is necessary.

Now I cannot but think that a house such as I have described would let at £120 a year, where now many of them are let at £90, and as time goes on will fetch less and attract a less desirable style of tenant. Considering the saving in upkeep of a basement, labour, food and keep of one maid, and the shrinkage of general expense which occurs when two maids are kept rather than three, it would pay the tenant well to expend the extra £30 a year. Even were the saving of expense no object, the additional comfort of a labour-saving house is worth the extra rent.

With the cost of heating by gas rather than coal I will deal later, but it must always be borne in mind that with coal range and coal fires in, say,

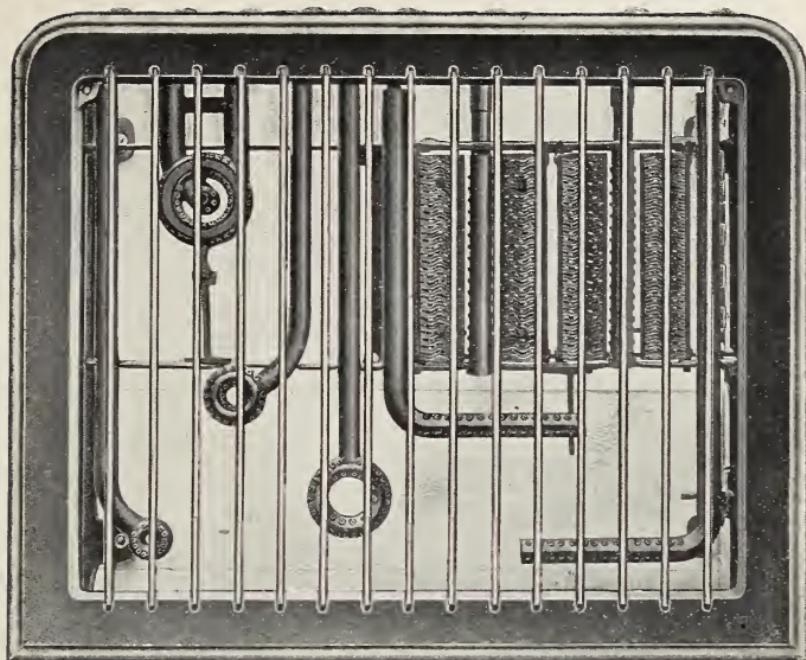
three or four rooms in such a house the labour is made far greater, and also the rooms become far dirtier.

In my own dining-room, where there is a gas fire, the dirt and dust is most noticeably less than in the drawing-room, where we burn coal.

I said at the beginning of this chapter that there were at least two methods of turning labour-making into labour-saving houses. Let us now suppose that we have to deal with another basement house, but that in this case the basement is neither deep nor dark.

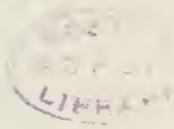
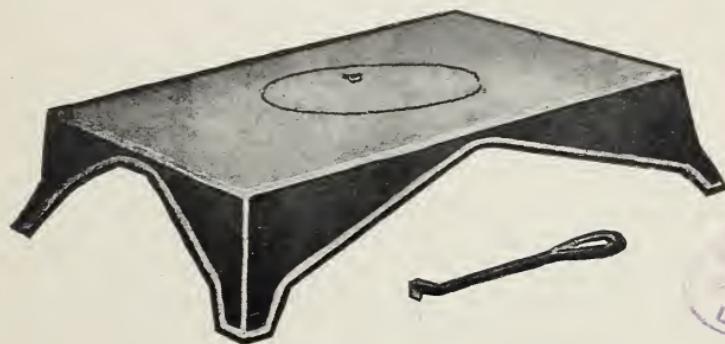
### A Second Suggestion for a Labour-Saving House.

The front room is quite light and cheerful, with a good view of the street. The back room is rather dark, and has a narrow area facing into a strip of garden. The house contains but five bedrooms, so that the basement cannot well be spared. Here I would use the front room (made very light and gay with paper and paint) as a combination servants' sitting-room, pantry, and store-room. The kitchen should be tiled if feasible—if not, papered with a white-tiled paper—and floored with black-and-white linoleum in order to make it as light as possible. The back area must



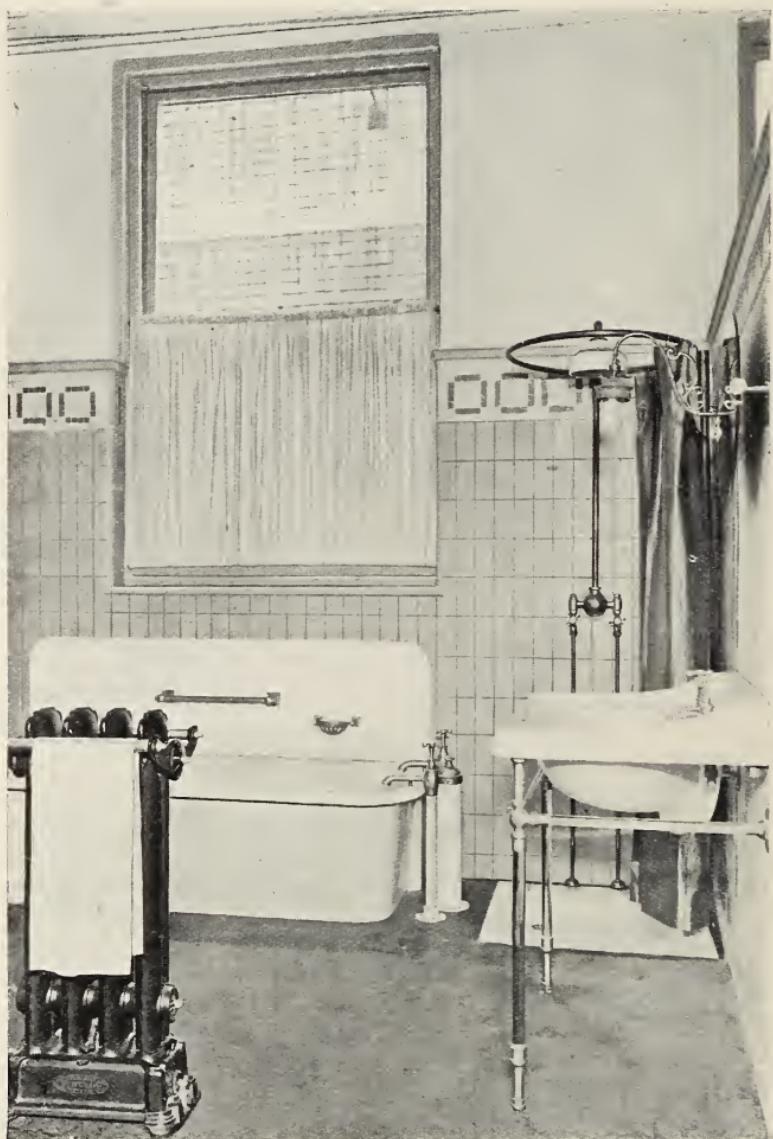
## A SENSIBLY-ARRANGED BOILING AND GRILLING TABLE

The burners vary from a small simmiering burner to a powerful concentric burner with two taps. This make of table can be furnished in over a dozen different sizes. (John Wright)

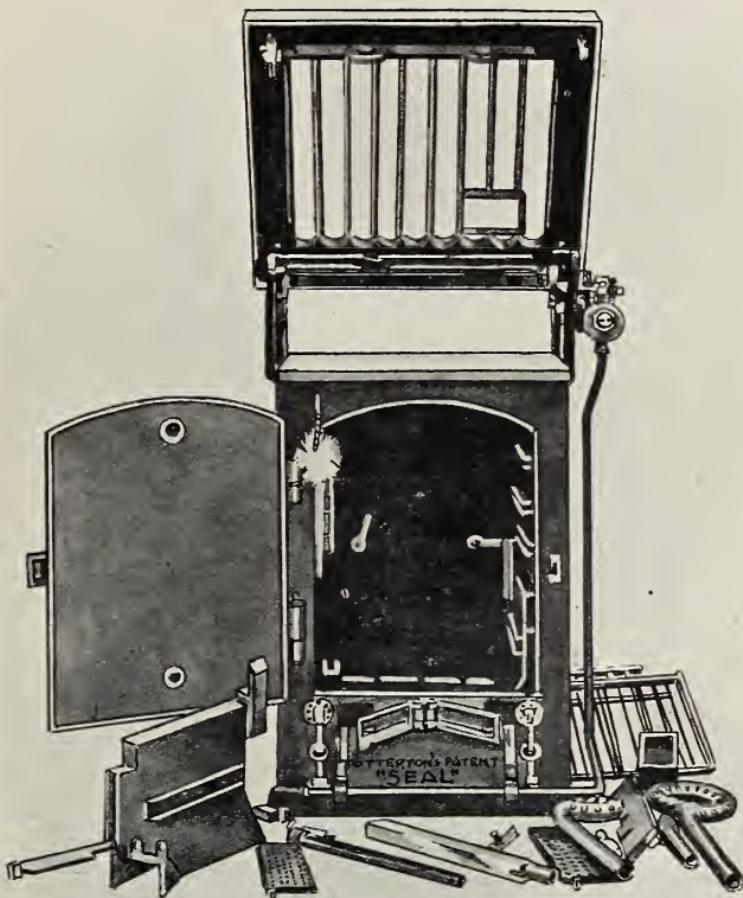


A large heating surface is provided, so that large or heavy utensils such as fish kettles etc., are in no danger of being upset on account of being top heavy, as is the case when they are balanced on an ordinary gas ring.

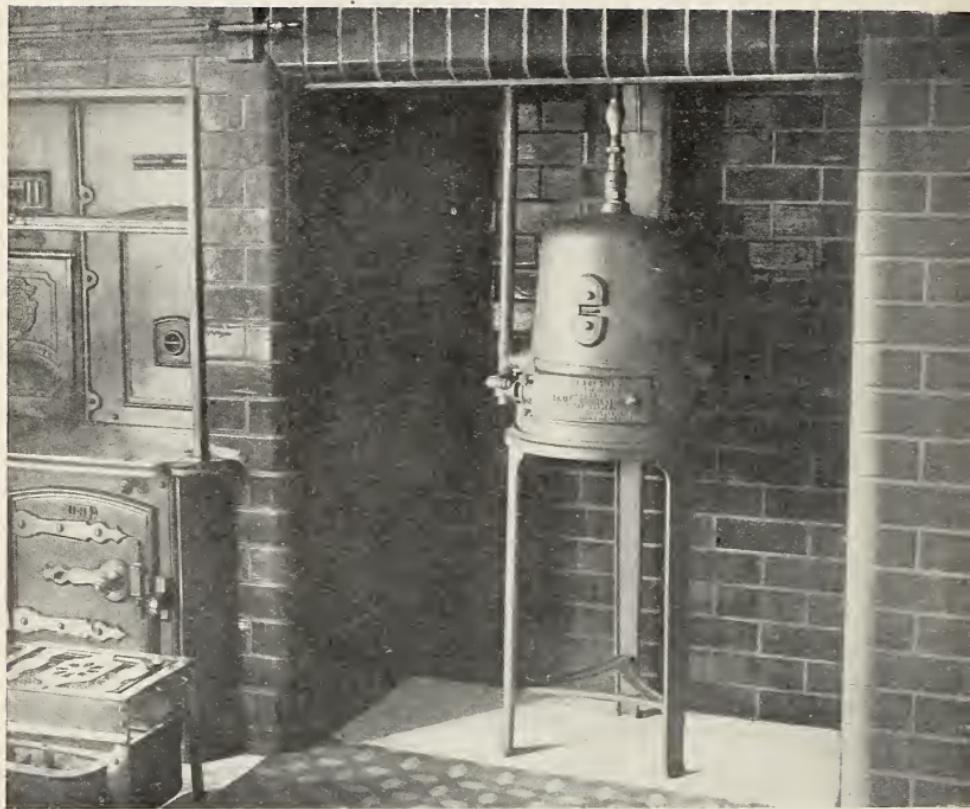
In the centre of the Hot Plate is a circular plate which may be removed when it is desired to allow the flames of the gas ring to come into direct contact with the cooking vessel. A lifter is provided for this purpose. (C. H. Kempton)



A WELL FITTED BATHROOM WITH A GAS-HEATED TOWEL RAIL AND FIXED  
WASH-STAND



THE ILLUSTRATION SHOWS A "POTTERTON" COOKER TAKEN TO PIECES FOR THE  
REGULAR CLEANING GIVEN BY ALL CAREFUL COOKS  
The fitments of all modern gas cookers are readily removable, and easily cleaned



JOHN WRIGHT'S B.T.U. CIRCULATOR IS INTENDED TO HEAT WATER WHICH CIRCULATES THROUGH PIPES INTO HOT WATER STORAGE TANKS, AND IS PARTICULARLY SUITABLE FOR CONNECTING UP TO HOT WATER APPARATUS ALREADY IN THE HOUSE.

The No. 3020 is suitable where the storage tank or cylinder does not contain more than 20 gallons, and the No. 2040 will suit a tank or cylinder of 40 gallons capacity.

be enlarged so as to give more light and air, and some steps should lead into the garden, where the maids can sit in hot weather. At present the basement consists of a front room and kitchen, coal cellars under the pavement, a lavatory, and a little piece at the end of the passage leading to the back area, which can be arranged for a knife-and boot-cleaning place. But there is no larder. This must be built. A door is cut to lead out of the kitchen into a tiny lobby, out of this lobby one door opens into the white-tiled, well-ventilated larder, and the other into the area.

The basement is now as light and airy as any basement can be. There is no scullery, but that apartment is unnecessary in most houses and certainly unnecessary in a small house where two, or at most three, servants are employed, and which contains a pleasant room in which they can sit and have their meals. The kitchen should be fitted with a gas or electric cooker and a gas or coke hot-water furnace. The front room is warmed by a gas stove, and in order to make up for the extra work entailed by the basement, a service lift is installed, with double hatches opening from kitchen and pantry, and from dining-room and smoking-room, which are directly over the kitchen and pantry.

This house is completed by a ground floor cloak-room and two bathrooms, gas fires everywhere but in the drawing-room, telephone bells, and in each room a tiny gas ring, so that in case of illness or other emergency hot water or hot food can be obtained without troubling the maids. With all these labour-saving arrangements two servants are able to do the work with ease, and to do it in such a way as is required by English gentlepeople, who entertain more than do their compeers in continental countries.

When planning and furnishing a house, say to yourself over and over again, "Some one will have to keep this clean."



## III

But in addition to structural labour-saving arrangements, these rearranged houses are furnished in a labour-saving manner.

Except in the drawing-room, there is as little furniture as possible, for crowded rooms are difficult to clean and take a long time to keep in order.

Wherever it is seemly, the floors are fitted with linoleum, for no other floor covering is so cleanly or so easy to keep in good condition. When there are rugs, they are sufficiently light to be easily shaken. Fitted carpets are taboo. Had money been no object the floors of the sitting-rooms would have been of polished wood, but in these two cases the surrounds were of linoleum and the carpets square, tightly strained and not of too thick a pile. These can be quickly swept with a Bissel sweeper and cleaned from time to time with a suction cleaner, while of course long-handled mops are used for the linoleum.

In kitchen and pantry the supply of pots and

pans, china, etc., is limited to what is necessary, and but little silver is used. Most of the food is cooked and served in casseroles, and so the washing up is lessened. The knives are of stainless steel and merely need washing.

In the two cases quoted the people who inhabited the houses were of the class who are accustomed to luxury, and a considerable amount of door opening, telephone answering, and informal entertaining had to be allowed for.

Without labour-saving arrangements, four servants, or three with a charwoman twice a week, would have been needed to do the work really well in the larger house, while three would have been required in the smaller house.

But supposing that the family was small and a simpler style of living needed, and that little or no entertaining took place, the mistress of the house and one good servant could have done the work of either house without undue strain and allowing each an ample amount of free time.

Those people who talk as if doing the work of the house was a pleasant occupation for one's spare hours speak without understanding of their words. The keeping of her house must be the profession of the servantless woman, but by adopting labour-saving methods she may yet have time and energy for other interests.

## CHAPTER V

### WHAT THIS CHAPTER IS ABOUT

*A List of Daily Duties in a Labour-Making House—A House-Hunting Experience—Managing with one Servant in a Labour-Saving House.*

## CHAPTER V

THE WORK OF A LABOUR-MAKING HOUSE, AND THE  
WORK OF A LABOUR-SAVING HOUSE

## I

THOSE women who have never been obliged to undertake any domestic duties have little idea of the amount of work which has to be done in the average house.

The following is a list of duties, and we must add to it the answering of bells, tidying up after untidy people, any personal services required (in many cases this is considerable), door opening, telephone answering, letter posting, note and message taking, "running out" for things which have been forgotten, whistling for cabs, waiting in the hall to see visitors out, etc., window cleaning, washing, mending, listing house linen for the laundry, extra work at special cleaning times, sweeps' visits, etc.

## Household Duties.

Light kitchen fire ; one or two days a week clean flues and thoroughly clean range.

Get in coal.

Clean doorstep and brasses.

Make tea, cut bread and butter, and take trays and hot water to bedrooms. Draw curtains, put washstands and possibly baths ready. Brush clothes, clean and take up boots.

Sweep stairs, do hall and sitting-rooms, grates and coals.

Get breakfast and set and serve it for servants and dining-room.

Clear and wash up. Knife cleaning. Area or backyards to brush out. Kitchen and back premises to clean.

Housework and turning out of rooms. Polishing bright metal, silver cleaning and pantry work of all kinds.

Cooking, washing up and cleaning after cooking. Keep a supply of coal ready.

Laying, serving, and washing up lunch and servants' dinner.

Tidying the washstands after lunch.

Tea. Shutting up rooms, bedroom work, hot water, etc. Wash up tea.

Dinner. Cooking, washing up and tidying. Pantry work. Servants' supper. Bedroom work, hot bottles. Bed.

These duties entail rising at any hour between six and seven, bed at any time between nine and eleven, at the best a fourteen and a half hours' day, during which hours in an easy situation the maid will have two and a half hours for meals (though parlourmaids and general servants cannot always enjoy uninterrupted meals), and about one and a half hours for reading, working, etc., leaving a ten-hour working day. From this deduct half a day a week and half of each alternate Sunday.

I contend that quite a third of this labour might be eliminated, and what remained greatly lightened by the adoption of labour-saving methods.

The following experiences are interesting as depicting the extraordinary difference in the amount of work which is exacted in a labour-making and a labour-saving home.

### Labour Making.—A House-Hunting Experience.

“It has fallen to my lot of late to inspect quite a large number of furnished houses and flats, and although my peregrinations have been limited to dwellings in what are known as ‘good situations,’

at fairly high rents, I have found such dirt and disorder as surely should only be excused by dire poverty.

“ As a general rule the sitting-rooms were more or less clean, but in few cases did bathrooms and lavatories, kitchen and servants’ premises fulfil the pleasant anticipations induced by the sight of the drawing-room.

“ Stained and blackened walls, dirty-looking baths, fusty sinks, make one long for ‘ seven maids with seven mops,’ and even with their help I, like the carpenter, am doubtful of the success of their labours.

“ Three, at all events, of the flats which I visited were so furnished that it was impossible to keep them clean, while several others might have been properly kept, given the services of a housemaid determined to clean in spite of every obstacle.

“ Very naturally, however, there are few such treasures to be met with, and I cannot but feel that it would be sad to waste them upon mistresses with so little idea of domestic sanitation as must have been the ladies who inhabited these flats.

“ Only one of the flats and two of the houses on the long lists submitted to me did I find really well arranged and well kept. This state of affairs

may be explained to some small extent by the fact that people who take a pride in their houses or who have just had them done up do not let them.

“ Still, although a house may be shabby it still may be clean and arranged in such a way as to enable the servants to perform their duties with good results and no unnecessary trouble. Now, let me describe to you one flat which I regard as an example of everything which a dwelling in a dirty town should not be.

“ It was an apartment consisting of three sitting-rooms, four bedrooms, bath, pantry, and kitchen. The long passage-hall of good width was very dark, partly because its four large windows had been so treated that hardly any light penetrated through them, and partly because the walls were papered dark green. As I progressed down this dismal tunnel I caught my foot in some obstruction and fell against a large piece of furniture. The servant then turned on the electric light and I discovered that the floor was covered with felt and by no less than twelve rugs, in a large hole in one of which I had caught my foot. By this time I had quite decided that nothing would induce me to take such a flat ; but, like Barry Pain’s Eliza,

my love of looking over other people's houses is so great that I continued my tour of inspection.

“The dining-room was crammed with large and handsome pieces of furniture, so large and so many that nothing less clever than a pantomime contortionist could have waited at table when the diners had taken their places.

“The walls were dark red and dirty ; the curtains of thick padded and lined tapestry were stiff and sticky with grime.

“In the drawing-room there was more really beautiful furniture and some exquisite Persian rugs on a dirty felt carpet. The curtains were of brocade, and there was a quantity of valuable china, much of it, sad to say, badly cracked.

“It was a room in which only an experienced housemaid should have been trusted, and much time should have been allowed to clean it satisfactorily. But a cook and a young house-parlour-maid were responsible for all the work of the flat. In the bedrooms dresses and coats hung on pegs on the doors, and cardboard boxes were piled on the tops of wardrobes and under the beds. The bath was minus most of its paint, the double bedroom for the servants was furnished with a strange collection of lumber, and the kitchen was frankly

dirty, one corner of it being taken up by a lovely old walnut wood talboys in a shocking state of ill-usage.

“ Now, although this was certainly the worst of the flats and houses at which I looked, it was no uncommon thing to find dresses hanging out in the dust, boxes piled under beds, ill-kept baths and sinks, and floors so covered that it must take hours of work every week to keep them more or less clean.

“ Indeed the result of my house-hunting led me to think that the average woman decorates, furnishes, and arranges her house in order to make it as difficult as it can be made to keep it clean.”

### How we manage with One Servant in our Labour-Saving House.

“ I have always been interested in your labour-saving ideas. I married, and we were comfortably off. We have a tiny London house and I arranged to have gas fires, cooker, and circulator, service lift, and also a rubbish destructor, as I hate nasty-smelling dustbins.

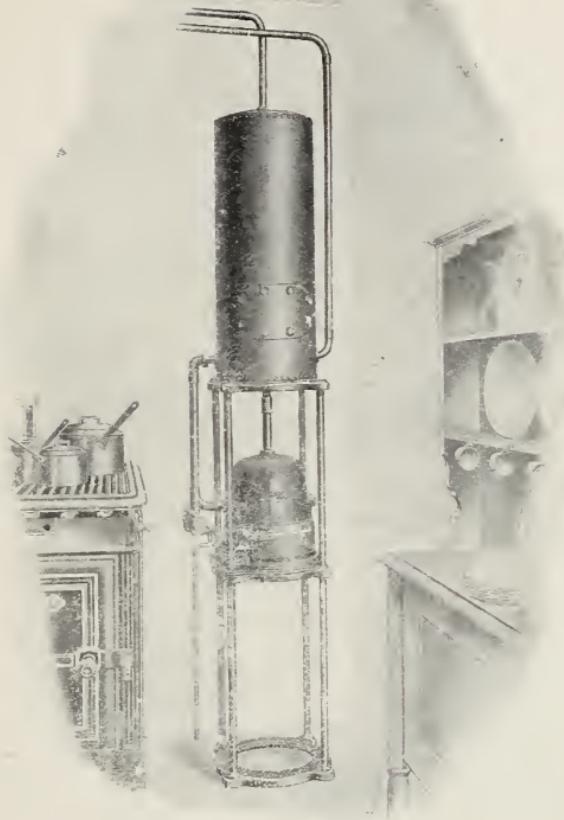
“ We can only have one bathroom, but there is hot and cold water, a sink and slop sink on the top floor.

“Gas fires are much improved and ours are really attractive to look at and well ventilated; but of course I would rather have coal to sit by, and we did have two coal fires at first; but now, since the war, I have all gas, because we are far worse off and living is so dear, and instead of two maids I now have only a general servant. We used to entertain in a mild sort of way a very great deal, but most of that naturally has come to an end.

“My husband is delicate, and I don’t like him to have cold meals at night, so when ‘General Jane’ is out (and I let her go out as often as possible), we have dinner laid, and soup, a hot dish such as braised cutlets, chicken en casserole, stewed steak (often it’s silverside really), with vegetables in it, and a dish of potatoes put ready on a heater on a side table I keep for the purpose. There is a cold sweet, so we do very well. I clear everything away and put dishes, etc., into the lift, which takes about six or seven minutes.

“Our bedrooms are linoleum floored and very empty. My own researches into domesticity prove to me that a crowded room is a bane to the house-maid. Our ex-parlourmaid, an admirable worker, told me that our rooms ‘took half the time to clean than most.’ ”

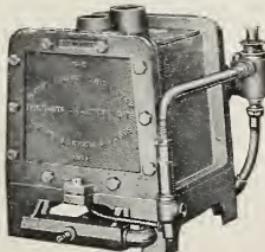
PLATE XVIII



THE "ACMEFONT" BUILDERS' SET

A combination of circulating Boiler, 20-40 gallons storage Cylinder, the circulating pipes between Boiler and Cylinder, and stand for the whole. This is a very suitable apparatus for fitting into houses where there is little available space.

PLATE XVIIIa



A "GILLED" CIRCULATOR

Can halve your work and double your comfort. It can provide a continuous supply of hot water in the kitchen, scullery, bathroom, and bedrooms at all times of the day and night. It needs no attention and is thoroughly reliable. It can be hired from most Gas Companies for a quarterly rental.

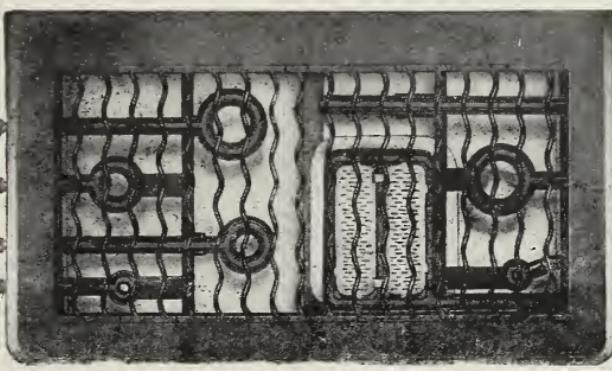




AN ALL GAS KITCHEN IN A FLAT

An all-gas kitchen in a modern flat fitted up by the Davis Gas Stove Co., Ltd. The illustration shows a gas cooker, with hot plate; a gas fire, with refuse destructor above. To the left of the fire-place is a circulator with storage tank over it, the pipes of which are carried through the linen airing cupboard, which is here shown open.

PLATE XX & XXa



SUGG'S "COMPACT" GAS KITCHENER  
is fitted with one large and one small oven, a great boon where the amount  
of cooking varies. Underneath the small oven is seen a closet for warming  
plates. The Hot Plate shown separately is fitted with six boiling burners  
and a grill burner



A KITCHEN IN A SMALL NON-BASEMENT HOUSE

The gas appliances here consist of a gas cooker and plate rack; a gas fire on which is fixed a boiler serving the storage tank above, and the circulating system to every tap in the house; copper suitable for home-washing, etc. The wash copper is fitted with a pipe which carries the steam into the kitchener flue, and is also fitted with a tap which serves to draw off dirty water.

This combination of gas appliances is a veritable boon in servantless or one-servant houses or flats.

**What the house-parlourmaid said:**

“Your rooms take half the time to clean of most, ma’am, and then look clean, which is more than some do.”



## II

“ I have an idea about gas cookers : they should be made longer and not so high, then they could be mounted at a convenient height. But I suppose they are planned to take up as little space as possible. It’s all the stooping that makes domestic work so tiring.

“ Jane does not go out until six o’clock on weekdays, and 3.30 every Sunday. We always go out to tea on Sundays, and the supper is left ready. We keep the house clean and have nice cooking and things well served and are very comfortable. I have people to lunch now and then and intimate friends to dinner, and by means of my hot plate and careful choosing of food, our Jane is dressed for lunch and able to wait at table, and I doubt if it occurred to anyone that there was not a cook in the kitchen. Not that it would have mattered if it had ! ”



It is not considered derogatory for an educated, refined woman to become a hospital nurse.

Is the nursing of the sick more important to the Nation than the proper feeding, housing, and bringing up of the rising generation ?

## CHAPTER VI

### WHAT THIS CHAPTER IS ABOUT

*The Management and Work of a Five Bedroom, Three Sitting-room London House—A Labour-Saving Country House—A Labour-Saving Flat—One Visiting Maid instead of Two Servants—A Suburban House—A Cookless Household—A Labour-Saving Household in a Provincial Town.*

## CHAPTER VI

OTHER PEOPLE'S EXPERIENCES OF LABOUR-SAVING  
HOMES.

## I

A Five Bedroom and Three Sitting-room  
London House.

“ **I**HAVE been much interested in your labour-saving articles. I send you a description of our new house. We have adopted many of your ideas.

“ The family consists of myself and husband and two just-grown-up daughters.

“ It so happened that some months ago we lost a little money, and we also came to the conclusion that we had been for some time spending more than we should have spent. Our house was rather expensive for our means; we kept five servants, entertained considerably in a simple manner, and lived easily. Finally, we decided to sell the house and take one which was smaller and possible to

run with a lessened staff, and, at the same time, if the servant difficulty became more acute, such a house as would attract domestics by reason of its labour-saving arrangements. A house was found, light, airy, quiet, in the required position, of suitable size, but absolutely lacking in modern improvements. As it stood it consisted of :

“ *Basement*.—Large front kitchen, back room (dark), lavatory, good wide shallow front area, easy stairs up to first floor, a washhouse built out from back room, two cellars, small wine cellar, no larder.

“ *Ground Floor*.—Dining and back dining-room (double doors), fairly wide hall, and passage out to garden at back, and lavatory (very old-fashioned).

“ *First Floor*.—Front and back drawing-rooms—total length, 28 feet ; width of front room, 18 feet ; back room, 12 feet.

“ *Second Floor*.—Two bedrooms.

“ *Third Floor*.—Two bedrooms, large cupboard on top landing.

“ Neither electric light, bathroom, nor hot water. A satisfactory lease could be had, and owner would put in new drainage and put house in outside repair. Rent only £100 a year if tenant would spend a certain sum on the house.

“ For convenience I will call ourselves Mr. and Mrs. A. After much consideration Mr. and Mrs. A. came to the conclusion that they would take the house and spend £350 in structural alterations.

“ After this had been decided, and the work begun, the war broke out, and Mr. A.’s income fell (at all events temporarily) to about £1,100 a year. He was, however, still in a position to spend £350 owing to the sale of the first house, for which a good premium had been obtained, and, being a person of some wisdom, he realised that the £350 would certainly swell into £500, though of that sum a part would be spent on decoration and moving expenses.

“ The arrangement of the house was to be as follows :

“ *Basement.—Front Room* (already fitted with white-glazed sink and tiled back) to be used for pantry, servants’ hall, workroom. Gas stove, linoleum on floor, green paint (varnished), light floral paper. Room was very light when furnished, and pleasant. It was supplied with a large linen cupboard and fitment cupboard for work materials and dress stands, pantry things, spare glass and china, chintzes, pillows, blankets, etc. This was fitted right across the end of the room.

*“ Back Room : Kitchen.*—Here a hot-water furnace to burn coke and rubbish and to heat water for pantry and kitchen, three lavatory basins, two bathrooms, and one large radiator in hall was installed ; gas cooker, white-glazed sink, white-tiled paper, green varnished paint ; service lift from kitchen to back dining-room, cleverly arranged to open either from pantry or kitchen, and to serve dining-room or back dining-room (to be used as smoking-room). A door was cut into the washhouse, which was connected by a lobby with a door with perforated zinc panels, opening into back area to ventilate kitchen and prevent the hot air from reaching the larder ; large window in larder, white-tiled walls. Back area enlarged to give more light and air to kitchen. All basement paint green varnished, white-tiled paper, stairs recased, telephone bells to all floors.

*“ Ground Floor.—Dining-room.* Panelled walls, mahogany finished doors and lift hatch. By means of lift servant need not leave the room while waiting. Gas fire and ring with heater for hot plates, etc., over it ; linoleum parquet surround, square carpet.

*“ Smoking-Room.*—Ditto in all respects save for furniture and gas ring. Telephone here, can be

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heard in basement ; lift also opens into this room. If dinner-party for more than eight is given, the double doors can be opened and dinner served from this opening of the lift.

“ *Hall*.—Linoleum and rugs ; passage into garden continued and widened, making extension large enough for a cloakroom, hot water, w.c., basin, etc. Over the hall extension, small new bedroom, just large enough for folding bed, dressing-table, fitted washstand, tiny hanging cupboard. Large window and glass doors, muffled, to give light to stairs.

“ *Double Drawing-room*.—The only coal fire and fitted carpet in the whole of the house ; pile carpet up to next half-landing, after that fitted linoleum with rubber treads to edges of stairs.

“ *Second Half-Landing*.—Bathroom. Tiled dado, lavatory, and wash basins, glass shelves.

“ *Second Floor: Bedrooms*.—Green linoleum, rugs, small beds, gas fire and gas ring for kettles.

“ *Third Floor: Half-Landing*.—Bathroom. Tiled dado, lavatory, hand basin, and hot cupboard for airing and for housemaid’s brushes.

“ *Third Floor*.—Girl’s room in front, gas fire and ring. Room for two maids at back. Linoleum everywhere, small beds.

“ All paint on stairs, hall, gentlemen’s cloakroom black. Electric light everywhere.

“ The house now consisted of a double drawing-room, dining-room, smoking-room, five bedrooms, kitchen, pantry, servants’ hall and workroom combined, gentlemen’s cloakroom and two bathrooms.

“ The income did not permit of more than two servants being employed, namely, single-handed cook and house-parlourmaid ; wages £26 each. In addition they arranged two days a week for a charwoman. One week, on Wednesday, she turned out the drawing-room, which contained valuable glass, furniture, and china (not at all a labour-saving room !); the other week turned out the dining-room and tidied the drawing-room. In the afternoon she washed and ironed blouses, handkerchiefs, etc., which had already been put to soak, and in some cases washed, by one of the girls. On Friday she turned out the hall and cloakroom, and scrubbed out the basement, and did the cook’s work, that being the cook’s day out. The dinner, of a suitable order, was left ready by the cook. The regular work of the house was arranged thus :

“ *Cook*.—Clean doorstep, do hall and dining-room and cloakroom, all kitchen work and sweeping and dusting of servants’ hall, clean boots.

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“ *House-parlourmaid.*—Do smoking-room and drawing-room and first flight of stairs before breakfast at 8.45. Bedrooms, etc. Dressed for lunch at 1.30 ; usual parlourmaid’s duties. Each Wednesday fortnight, as she has nothing to do in the drawing-room, turns out smoking-room before breakfast. Special work : Monday, silver ; Tuesday, one bedroom ; Wednesday, silver ; Thursday, one bedroom ; Friday, silver ; Saturday, stairs and bathrooms.

“ It was arranged the family would use the bathrooms and that no bedroom or washstand work would be needed. Each person stripped and turned back her bed and left it to air and ready to be made. One daughter helped to make beds and did a certain amount of washing of oddments, using the nearest bathroom and keeping a folding table for ironing in her bedroom, where there was a gas ring for the irons.

“ The three ladies undertook all mending, and arranging of flowers. Each member of the family promised to leave lavatory basins washed and wiped out after use and to avoid by untidiness and carelessness giving any extra trouble.

“ Arranging the work in this way the trials of a two-maid household were banished, for there was

ample time for pantry work and the house-parlour-maid to be dressed in time for lunch, while days out made no difference to the household.

“With a little careful management of the menu and the help of the lift the one maid could wait on eight people at lunch or dinner if necessary, and there was no necessity for the harassing ‘Oh, we mustn’t ask people to tea on Wednesday or to lunch on Friday’ atmosphere. Needless to say, without a lift, telephone bells, and fitted ‘washing rooms,’ linoleum-covered floors, uncrowded rooms, gas cooker, and hot-water furnace, which does not require flue cleaning and needs but little attention, it would be impossible to keep a London house of the size spick and span, and run in the way in which people accustomed to a larger establishment expect. The furnace consumes about two scuttlefuls of coke a day, and needs paper, wood, and a little coal to start it. Half an hour suffices to heat the bath water. After breakfast rubbish of all kinds is burned, and but little heat is needed for the remainder of the day, unless baths at night are required. A kettle is kept on the furnace, or when any dish is to be simmered slowly it can stand on the furnace, and the gas stove burned only when quite necessary. In hot weather the furnace is let out after lunch.”

## A Labour-Saving Country House.

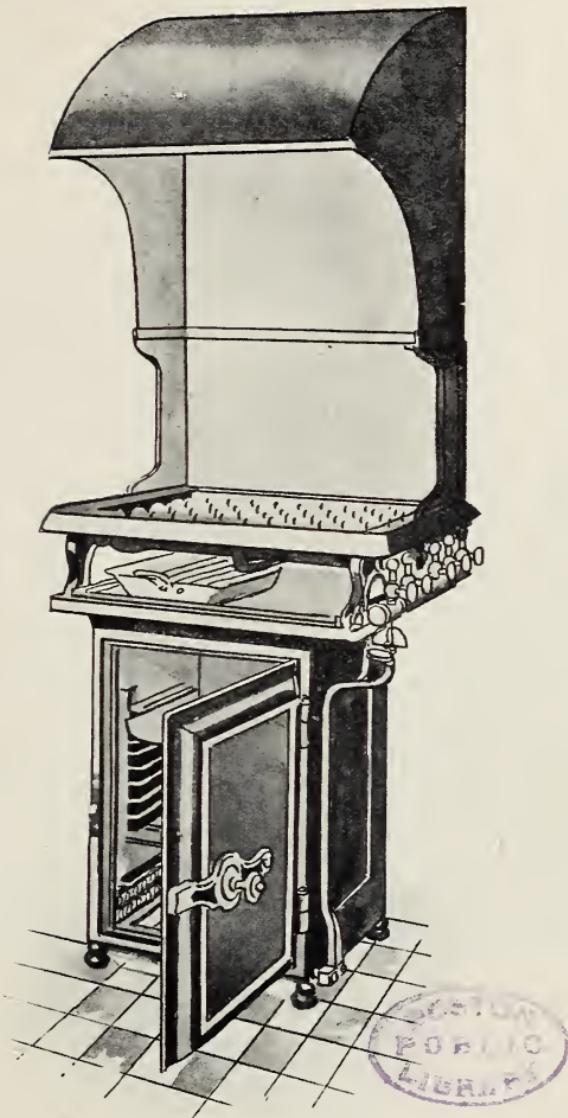
“ I have just read your article, and should like to tell you of a house my husband and I have just built. We have occupied it for eight months, and therefore have tested the various labour-saving contrivances. It was built and designed under my direction, in order to save all unnecessary labour. The house is warmed by central heating and electric radiators, and there is a radiator and complete gas range in the kitchen. We have a double earthenware sink, with two sets of taps, in the kitchen, and no scullery. The furniture is oak, and only needs dusting, and there is no brasswork anywhere. The fireplaces are entirely of white tiles, and we have no use for fireirons. The steps to the front and side doors are of marble, and the stair-rod s are of oak. Each principal bedroom (three in number) has its own bathroom, completely fitted, adjoining, so that we have no washstands in the house. The servants’ bedrooms have each a lavatory basin with hot and cold water, and a radiator. Drinking water is laid on to each bedroom. Hot water, which is really hot, is from a furnace in the cellar, and the central heating is worked in the same way. These furnaces work quite smoothly, and give no trouble. We have a well-heated linen room, which keeps linen

and blankets well aired, and a light and easily handled vacuum cleaner.

“ We have had no fire anywhere all the winter, and the temperature of the house, hall, stairs, passages, etc., has been very steadily at 60° Fahrenheit, day and night. During a frosty spell we keep the furnace going a little more strongly. All the principal rooms have powerful electric wires to enable one to boil kettles, cook, iron, etc.

“ So far I have kept three servants, but I find they are so opposed to all my labour-saving devices —refusing even to touch the vacuum cleaner!— that I am parting with them, and am engaging two ladies instead; and although the house is large enough to require six servants if differently fitted, they and I confidently expect to run it easily and comfortably, with plenty of time to spare for recreation.”

PLATE XXII



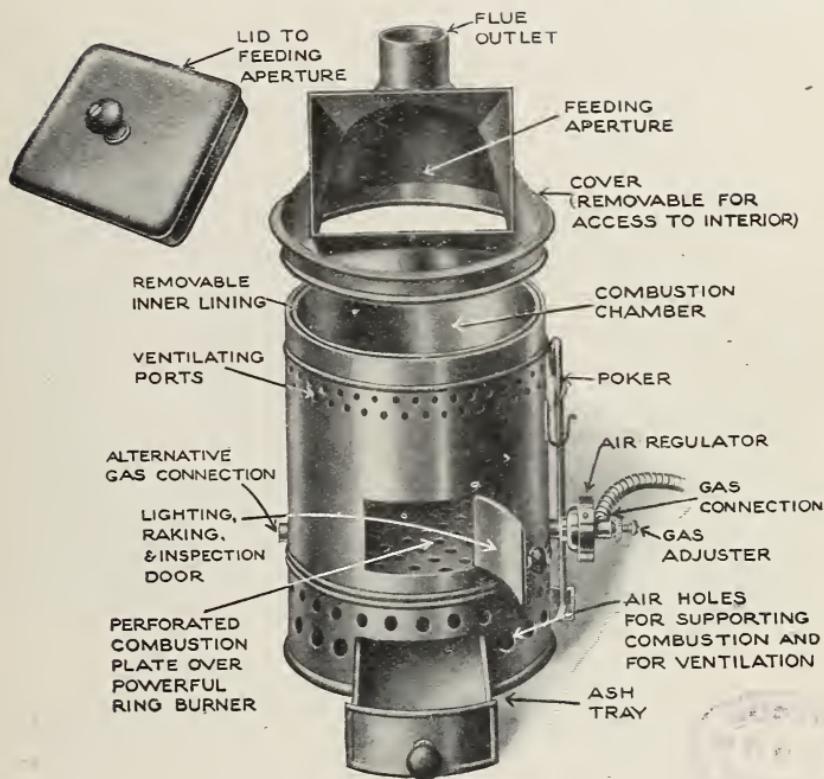
SUGG'S HOOD AND PLATE RACK FOR GAS KITCHENERS  
is strongly made of wrought iron with nozzle for flue and  
with grid shelf, having cast-iron brackets for fixing securely  
to the top of kitchener, japanned white inside and black  
outside, or any colour to order



## AN ALL GAS KITCHEN IN A BASEMENT HOUSE

This sketch shows the gas cooker with hot plate over. A small bungalow cooker for use when one or two persons only are to be served, and a coke boiler which heats the hot water required in the house (including 2 baths and 2 radiators) and is surmounted by a useful flat plate upon which a stockpot or casserole can be kept simmering for hours without use of extra fuel. The coke boiler in this instance serves to heat the kitchen without further firing. On the left of the boiler is shown the service lift.

PLATE XXIV



GAS REFUSE DESTRUCTION

The Davis Domestic "Burn-All" with cover and lid of feeding aperture removed, inspection door open, ash tray drawn out, and parts described.

The Davis Domestic "Burn-All" can also be supplied in a larger size (of double capacity) for use where the model illustrated would not be adequate for the service required. Particulars on application to The Davis Gas Stove Co. 60, Oxford Street, W.



## AN ALL GAS KITCHEN IN A LARGE HOUSE

Three gas boilers are shewn, one or all of which can be in use as occasion demands. These supply the storage tanks and a continuous service of hot water to four bathrooms, wash-basins in lavatories and sinks. The hot closet is served by coils from hot water service so that dishes can be kept hot. There is a supplementary method of heating this closet by means of gas burners, which can be used when the large gas boilers are not required. Hot water for a bathroom is provided by a geyser when only one or two of the family are at home. A condensing stove heats the kitchen in winter.

This house is warmed throughout by hot water pipes heated by a coke boiler which is used during the winter months only and gas fires are fitted in each room for occasional use. The makers represented are:

Boilers: One John Wright Boiler: One Davis Boiler: One Potterton Boiler

Cooker: John Wright & Co.

Hot Cupboard fitted up by the Gas Company to special measurements

Condensing Stove: Richmond Gas Stove & Meter Co., Ltd.

Refuse Destructor: Davis Gas Stove Co., Ltd.

“ Consider, on the other hand, . . . if these women did the work of their homes, and saved the money which they waste on . . . incompetent servants, the chief cause of their worry and troubles . . . they could travel . . . and come back to England . . . with the thing which more than anything else we stand in need of . . . ideas.”

“ Life without Servants.”

By a Survivor.



## II

## A Labour-Saving Flat.

“I live by myself and have until lately kept two servants. In consequence, most of my income has been spent on housekeeping. I prefer many other things to food, soap, dusters, and servants, so now I have altered my arrangements.

“My flat consists of two sitting-rooms, kitchen, and three bedrooms. The block ought, of course, to have been supplied with a constant service of hot water for heating and cleaning, but we are behind the times in England in these matters. So now I have gas fires in all the rooms and a gas circulator and a gas cooker. Electric light everywhere. I have made the third room into a box-room, dress-room, etc., and have table, dress-stand, and machine, and a work-woman sews there one day a week and keeps me mended and tidy, and also makes covers and lampshades, and so on. Sometimes she comes two or even three days if I need her, and except for tailor-mades, hats, and a good dress now and again, she makes all I wear. I find this a great economy.

“ All my floors are covered with linoleum. I have weeded out unnecessary furniture, only keeping really good pieces. I have muslin screens made to fit the windows, so dirt does not come in, and having no coal fires, the rooms keep extraordinarily clean. I have a fitted bathroom and no washstand work. My breakfast I have in bed as early as I please, and it consists of tea, a boiled egg, and jam or fruit and toast. It is all put ready on a covered tray and I have an electric arrangement for boiling water and making toast by my bedside. I turn on the gas circulator and my gas fire and go back to bed and have breakfast and read my papers and letters.

“ By the time I want to get up my room is warm and the bath water hot. I generally breakfast at seven, as I like to read a good deal before getting up. My daily servant comes at eight and stays till after lunch. She is able to clean and cook and leave my simple dinner ready, sometimes in a hay box and sometimes put ready for me to heat. I am seldom in to tea, and if I am it is a simple matter to prepare that meal.

“ I have no objection to answering my door, but if I wish to be ‘ Not at home ’ the hall indicator proclaims that fact. The porter takes in parcels if I ask him to do so, and cleans boots, carries

luggage, and gets cabs, or in these days doesn't get them ! I do various little jobs of polishing, cleaning, etc., because I like a very clean house. In the drawing-room I have an electric fire cleverly made to flicker like real flames. It is nice to sit with because it has the movement that one misses. Sometimes I have a friend to stay, and if I have friends to dine I engage a waitress and keep my out-worker all day. I often have friends to lunch, but more often entertain at my club. I am more comfortable than when I had two maids and my expenses are far less. I think my two young ladies must have been very hospitable, for my bills were decidedly high. Also they seemed to live on soap and dusters, and to consume incredible quantities of electric light and gas. Of course, if I had fires and coals and a kitchen range and crowded rooms, and wanted elaborate meals, I could not manage as I do ; but as things are, I am both clean and comfortable.”

#### A Three Sitting-room, Hall, and Six Bedroom Suburban House.

“ I call this house suburban because it is within ‘ daily bread ’ distance of London and therefore the neighbourhood is much built over. This

enables us to have electric light and a telephone, and the London stores deliver three times a week. I was told that servants were simply appalling, so bad and so hard to find. So I thought we had better be as independent of them as possible. We had taken a small house and were rearranging it, so I decided to have a coke furnace for hot water and radiators and little electric fires in the drawing-room and smoking-rooms, for cold weather and for the cheering effect a fire gives. The gardener undertakes the furnace and stokes at seven, at midday, and when he leaves at night. The house is beautifully warm, and we have no trouble with radiators or hot water. I have no scullery, but cook by electricity, and have a sink in the kitchen, where there is an alcove with a table and armchairs for the maids, and they have their own little piece of garden to sit in. There is a pantry, and the house-parlourmaid can sit there if she wishes. There is a buttery hatch into the dining-room, and the cook has only to hand the dishes through it. I keep an oil stove in readiness should the electric cooker go wrong, but so far it has not. The cook's work is greatly lessened when cooking by electricity. We have three bathrooms and no washhandstand bedroom work. The house has polished wood

floors, and rugs and linoleum. It is simply but well furnished, and I have glass over the mahogany toilet tables, sideboard, and side tables. Very little metal work, and the doors and woodwork are unpainted. This saves much labour. We have a polished dinner-table and save the cost of buying and washing tablecloths, side and toilet cloths. Unfortunately, I had knives of the old-fashioned kind, but use a knife machine, and long-handled mops, Bissel sweeper, etc. In normal times we entertained a good deal, and then had a woman to help wash up ; but now, of course, there is practically no entertaining.



“I hate linoleum. I like nice, bright coal fires. I abhor sparsely furnished rooms. I think your ideas are detestable !!”

I knew you would say that. Most people are antagonistic to the ideas of other people until they have had time to become used to them and regard them as their own.

Still, the title of this book is not “The House of My Dreams,” or “A Castle in Spain,” but

“The Labour-Saving House.”



## III

“ My labour-saving ideas were put to the test, for the gardener was called up, and the cook was ill, and I could not get anyone else for nearly a fortnight. My husband fed the furnace night and morning, and he and I gardened (he was in London five days a week from nine till seven). The house-parlourmaid (a capital girl), and myself, cleaned and cooked, and by careful planning we kept the house nice, and fed well—that is, as well as one does feed nowadays. I was able to go on with my war work, and my maid went out often, as I do not approve of shutting up young girls for days together. We covered up the drawing-room and the unused bedrooms and bathroom. When you have no coals to bother with, housework becomes a very different matter. I put your idea of cooking mornings into practice, and found that if I cooked three mornings a week I need do very little on the intermediate days. Then cooking by electricity is so easy. There is no stooping to lift things out of ovens, and the cooker can be put where you

want it as regards the light, and the pots and pans don't get dirty outside. I used earthenware, and cooked and served in one pot, and so saved washing up. Alice, the maid, and I quite enjoyed ourselves, and we made no trouble of stoking the furnace at midday.

“ One thing struck me : how tiresome to servants it must be when they see people using just as many knives and spoons and forks and plates as they can—for I must own I began to feel rather mean about the washing up. I think meals had become too long, and the service far too elaborate, and the result not worth all the time and trouble it entailed. It makes me sad to think of all the girls and women there are who are tired to death doing work which they could be saved. I often think of the working-class women toiling along, and having to bear and rear babies all the time ! ”

### A Labour-Saving House in a Provincial Town.

“ My experiences may interest you. The family consists of myself, husband, a girl of six, and a boy of three. I kept a nurse, cook, house-parlourmaid, and a ‘tweeny.’ The wage bill was high, the house-keeping bills, including replacements, coal and light, food and cleaning materials, excessive, and we found it hard to get even a fairly good cook.

“ Suddenly I decided to try the following plan. The house was modern and rather well planned. Dining and drawing-room, small square hall, kitchen and pantry on ground floor, a little garden back and front, and a mosaic doorstep, only one step. First floor, four bedrooms and a bathroom and dressing-room. Above, two rooms and box-room. Gas is dear here, and electric current moderate in price, so I had electric fires and cooker put in. There already was hot water on ground floor. I managed to plan a service lift from outside the kitchen to first floor.

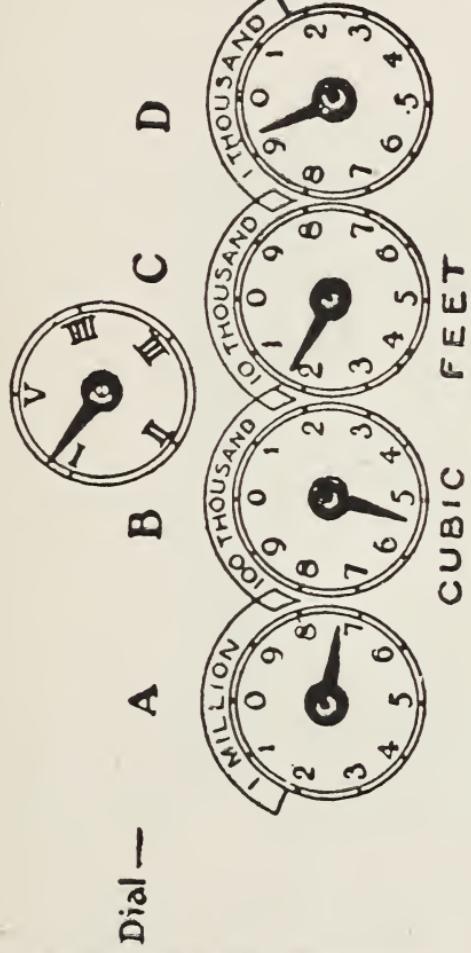
“ I then looked over my possessions, and put away unnecessary things and simplified the style of living somewhat. Then I engaged a trained lady nurse, capable of teaching the children for a year or two. The nurse agreed to dust her nurseries, and I gave up to her a nursery, night nursery, and the dressing-room opening into the night nursery. The floors of all bedrooms, bathrooms, landing, top stairs, kitchen and offices were all covered with linoleum. The nurse agreed to dust and tidy the nurseries and take the dishes, etc., out of the lift, and to replace them. I arranged a pantry cupboard for her and she had electric fires and heater for food, irons, etc. The bathroom with hot and

cold water was next door. My husband and I had the other two rooms, and he had a bath and hand-basin fitted in the one he used for his dressing-room. We thought it cheaper to have a gas circulator rather than an electrical heater for the hot water, and we had a radiator fitted in the hall and on the first landing. These keep the house so warm that we need wonderfully little in the way of extra firing. Nurse has everything she needs to hand, and says she prefers it to having to ask the maids to fetch and carry for her. She has friends near, and we can often let her go out when the babes are put to bed, as I can sit in the drawing-room and hear at once if they call.

“I then dismissed my cook and ‘tweeny,’ as I did not like them very much, and asked the house-parlourmaid if she would like to stay at an increased wage if I undertook the greater part of the cooking and had a charwoman two days a week. Our hall floor is mosaic, and there is a little shed for the perambulator, so it does not come into the house. We are all called by alarm clocks, and we make our early tea on the electric heater in our room, so that the maid has no hot water or tea to bring or calling to do. When dressed, she goes straight downstairs and lights the gas to heat the water, does hall, dining-room and smoking-room.

Many people live in a continual state of worry because they feel obliged to have a little more of everything than they can afford : not because they want it, but because other people think they ought to want it.





## METER READING

In order to check expenditure on gas and to detect wastage, leakage, or faulty registration, the gas-meter ought to be read regularly, say once a week, and a record kept of the amount of gas consumed.

Meter reading is quite simple, and it should be no more difficult for an educated woman to learn to read her own gas-meter than a reasonably intelligent child to learn to tell the time by the clock. The only thing to remember is that as meat is measured in "thousands" (of cubic feet). If, therefore, you have burned ten "thousands", and gas in your districts is, say, half-a-crown a thousand, your bill will be ten half crowns. If gas is 3/- a thousand, then your bill will be ten times 3/-, and so on.

A copy of instructions mounted on a card can always be had from the local gas manager, and hung up in a convenient place near the gas meter until it is mastered by constant use.

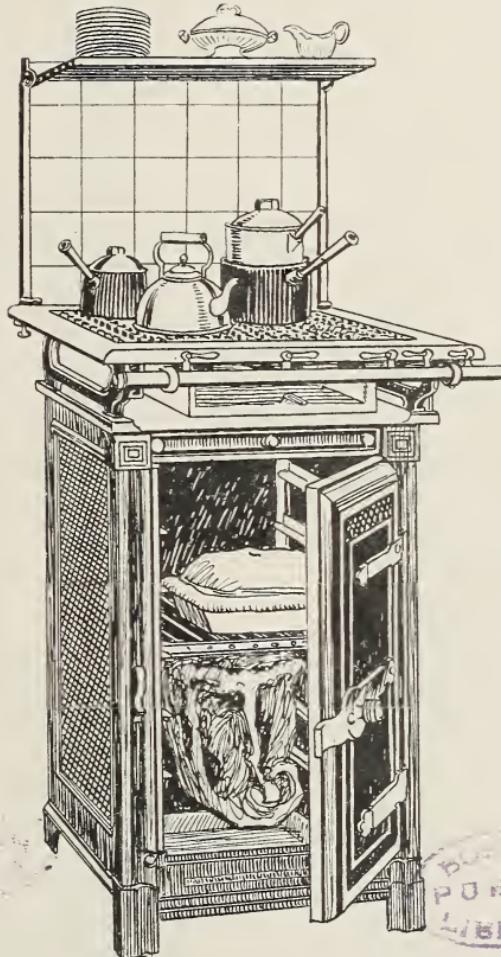
The meter consists of five dials. Of these the top one should be neglected; then the figures indicated by the four lower ones should be written down from left to right, and so added to the end. If the hand is between two figures the lowest should always be written down, with the exception that when it is between 9 and 0, 9 must be recorded. That is all there is to do; and by this simple procedure it is possible to find out exactly how much gas has been used during the week, and whether it is more or less than the amount consumed during the preceding week. If it happens to be more, then the careful housewife will set about considering the circumstances and seeing in what points she has failed to practice the economies suggested to her.

PLATE XXVII

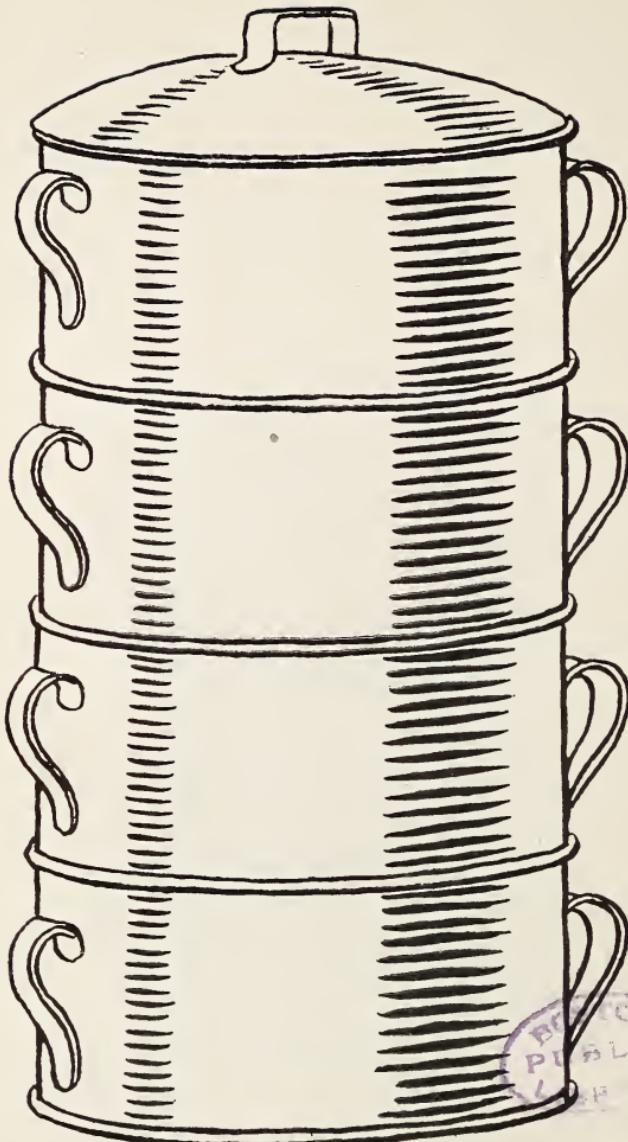


MAKING GOOD USE OF THE OVEN ON BAKING DAYS  
Note the two pies one behind the other, not side by side.

PLATE XXVIII



LARGE JOINT SUSPENDED, AS IN ROASTING BEFORE  
AN OPEN FIRE, WITH PIE ON TOP SHELF



A STEAMER WHICH CAN BE USED TO COOK A WHOLE DINNER  
OVER ONE GAS RING

This is made of block tin and boils with very little gas. Several forms of steamer, with from three to six compartments, can now be bought. The multiple steamer costs much less than three to six single saucpans, and burns much less gas.

## IV

“ This is rather a clean town, and with no fires the rooms do not get dirty, and are quickly swept and dusted, and of course there are no coal boxes to fill or carry, and no grates to do. We find the doorstep only needs doing three times a week, except in very dirty weather, and there is no polished metal on the door. We have a simple breakfast of porridge (cooked the day before), toast, done on our own electric toaster on the table, fresh and crisp and hot. We make our own tea and coffee, and boil eggs if needed, and very often have a cold dish, but about three times a week the maid cooks bacon, or fish, or eggs. My husband goes off to work after breakfast, and is seldom home till six. The maid cleans boots, and we have the new washable knives. I clear breakfast things and wash them up, tidy the flowers and see to plants, etc., and set to work at my cooking. I follow the plan you once suggested, and have three cooking mornings. It is wonderful with practice what you get through, washing up as you go and never getting into a muddle. On the other days the cooking

seldom takes me more than an hour. Two mornings a week I housekeep, doing accounts, shopping, etc., and on one I clean silver. We breakfast at eight and lunch at 1.30, so I get a long morning. The maid has all morning for housework, and nurse helps her make the beds. We wait on ourselves at lunch, and nurse and the children come down. After lunch the maid clears and washes up and tidies the kitchen. Nurse gets and washes up the nursery tea, and if I am in and alone I have it with her. I don't expect any washing or mending done by the general servant, as I consider she should have two hours' free time in the afternoon. Our dinner is very simple—three things, such as soup or fish, meat or bird, sweet, savoury or cheese. The charwoman cleans kitchen, back doorstep, pantry, passage, and hall; washes out rubbers and odds and ends, and washes up and tidies after dinner. My maid has her family near, so she goes out two evenings a week from half-past five to a quarter to ten, and the charwoman stays here till 8.30 on those days. It suits her to come to me at eleven o'clock, and I pay her 3s. instead of 2s. 6d. as she stays late, and of course she gets her supper. I have fitted her out with dress and aprons. She won't wear a cap.

“Indeed, we manage most comfortably, and the saving is great. I cook well, and make the best of all we have, and the economy in gas and light and cleaning things and breakages is considerable. Our nice maid, Ethel, is quite one of the family, and says that getting out on Sundays, Tuesdays, and Fridays, ‘there is always something to look forward to.’ In winter I consider she should go out by daylight, so I often send her off early on the charwoman’s day. If I went away from home I should engage a temporary cook, and if we wanted to have a party I should have a cook by the day, and a waitress. I work at a war depot every day, and often have my tea there. But even after the war I doubt if I shall alter my ways, provided I remain in good health, for I cannot see why it should be *infra dig.* to work in one’s own house when it is absolutely ‘the thing’ to be a general servant or kitchenmaid in a hospital or canteen.”



Man and the ape shared a common ancestor.  
Is it a reversion to type which causes us to  
scramble about on all fours when we scrub and  
clean ?

Our developed intelligence should deter us from  
adopting monkey-like attitudes and time-wasting  
methods.

## CHAPTER VII

### WHAT THIS CHAPTER IS ABOUT

*Labour and Time-Saving Housekeeping*  
—*Ordering in Advance—Cooking Mornings—Labour-Saving Utensils—The Late-Dinner Bogey—Simplified Requirements.*

## CHAPTER VII

OTHER PEOPLE'S EXPERIENCES OF LABOUR-SAVING HOMES (*Continued*)

## I

FOR many a year I have thought that the average good domesticated woman wasted far too much of her own time and that of her servants in housekeeping, while, on the other hand, many women give too little time and attention to their households.

Clever organisation will do much to lighten the work of a household. Take, for example, the ordering of meals and the cooking thereof. The average mistress orders the meals each day with no regard except for the needs of that special day, and the average cook cooks in just the same short-sighted manner. Now, I hold that in a well-regulated establishment, with an intelligent cook, it should not be necessary to order the meals more than three times a week, unless special entertaining

has to be considered. The mistress knows the number of her household, and can calculate with sufficient nicety what can be done with the available material, while the cook should be able to make the most of the various odds and ends which can be utilised for breakfast dishes, savouries, servants' supper, and so forth.

Where an inexperienced or otherwise unsatisfactory cook reigns, then a brief daily inspection of larder and back premises in general may be necessary; but still all the main part of the planning and ordering can be done twice or three times a week.

In this book I do not wish to deal specially with war conditions, so let us take, for example, a well-to-do country household of four persons (husband, wife, two children) and five servants, cook, between-maid, housemaid, parlourmaid, and nurse. In such a case the maids are, as a rule, experienced, and the cook a woman who receives anything between £26 and £35 a year.

There is generally a guest staying in the house, and a couple of people to lunch on Sunday, various friends to tea, and probably two or three more friends to lunch during the week. The mistress of this house elects to have housekeeping mornings on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, though, of

course, it is understood that she will visit the back premises on any other mornings if it is advisable to do so.

On Monday the contents of the larder are as follows : Piece of cold roast ribs of beef, remains of two boiled chickens, half a ham, half a cold fruit tart, some lemon sponge, some potted meat, and part of a tin of sardines.

Now, meat should always be ordered in advance so that the butcher may have it properly hung. If the larder is not very good the butcher will keep the meat until the day on which it is needed, otherwise a joint should always be hanging in the larder, and in this case a fourquarter of lamb has been in the house since Saturday.

Madame plans her menu, and writes it in her order book as follows :—

**ORDER DAY.—MONDAY.—LUNCH FOR FIVE, 1.30 P.M.—**(The two children are present.) Cold Beef. Salad. Mashed Potato. Minced Chicken with Pearl Barley stewed in stock. Milk Pudding. Cold Fruit Tart. Lemon Sponge in glasses. Cheese, Biscuits and Butter. Servants' hall same as dining-room, except for chicken.

**DINNER FOR THREE, 8 P.M.—**Cream of Cucumber Soup (made from chicken stock). Soufflé of Dried

Haddock. Lamb Cutlets. Potatoes. Cabbage Purée. Apple Meringue. Sardine Savoury.

TUESDAY.—BREAKFAST, 9 A.M.—Cold Ham. Scones. Fruit. Boiled Eggs.

LUNCHEON, 1.30 P.M. (two extra).—Tomatoes au gratin. Mousse of Salmon. Roast Partridges. Sauce. Crumbs. Fried Potatoes. Salad. Apple Gâteau. Cheese Biscuits. Fruit. Coffee.

SERVANTS' DINNER.—Roast Shoulder of Lamb. Potatoes. Vegetable. Pudding.

DINNER FOR THREE, 7.45 P.M.—Clear Soup. Fillets of Sole, and Macaroni au gratin. Tournedos of Beef. Potatoes. Vegetable Marrow. Ginger Cream. Curried Croûtons.

ORDER DAY.—WEDNESDAY.—BREAKFAST.—Cold Ham. Cold Game. Salmon Coquilles.

LUNCHEON FOR FOUR, 1.30 P.M.—Scotch Broth (scrag end of Neck of Lamb). Roast Beef. Yorkshire Pudding. Brown Potatoes. Stewed Spanish Onion. Bread-and-Butter Pudding. Ginger Cream. Servants' dinner same, except for soup.

DINNER FOR Two, 7.45 P.M.—Carrot Purée. Timbale of Lamb (remains of cold lamb). Vegetables. Fricassée of Eggs. Apple Tart.

THURSDAY.—BREAKFAST.—Ham. Toast. Potted Game (remains of partridges). Boiled Eggs.

LUNCHEON, 1.30 P.M. (one extra).—Riz à la Turque. Cold Beef. Salad. Potatoes. Fruit Compote. Junket. Cheese, etc.

DINNER FOR TWO, 7.45 P.M.—Curry Soup. Fillets of fresh Haddock. Roast Grouse. Crumbs. Salad. Fried Potatoes. Nut Sauce. Pineapple Jelly (some of pine used in Fruit Compote). Anchovy Straws.

ORDER DAY.—FRIDAY.—BREAKFAST.—Egg Kedgeree. Bacon.

LUNCHEON, 1.30 P.M.—Fish Pie. Knuckle of Veal stewed with rice. Parsley Sauce. Boiled Damson Pudding. Servants' hall same.

DINNER FOR FOUR, 8 P.M. (two guests Friday to Monday).—Celery Soup. Fillets of Whiting. Chutney Sauce. Soufflé of Veal. Curry Sauce. Roast Partridges. Sauce. Crumbs. Salad. Potatoes. Compote of Pears. Devilled Liver Croutons.

SATURDAY.—BREAKFAST.—Game Toast. Bacon. Poached Eggs. Cold Tongue. Scones. Fruit.

LUNCHEON.—Hominy Cutlets. Beef Steak Pie. Cold Game. Salad. Vegetables. Portuguese Apples. Milk Pudding. Cheese.—Servants' dinner.—Beef Steak Pie. Baked Apple Pudding.

DINNER FOR FOUR, 8 P.M.—Clear Beetroot Soup. Mock Whitebait. Tartar Sauce. Chicken Cutlets.

Braised Tongue and Sweet Corn. Spinach. Mousse of Blackberries. Cheese croquettes.

SUNDAY.—BREAKFAST.—Grape Nuts and Cream. Cold Tongue. Haddock. Egg Dish.

LUNCHEON FOR EIGHT, 1.30 P.M.—Mousse of Chicken and Tomato Salad. Braised Beef (hot). Cold Tongue. Salad. Vegetables. Damson Tart. Pearl Barley Cream. Cheese Biscuits. Fruit. Cake.

SUPPER.—Soup. Stuffed Eggs in aspic. Cold Braised Beef. Salad. Potatoes. Trifle. Stewed Fruit. Savoury Tartlets.

MONDAY.—BREAKFAST FOR FOUR, 8.30 A.M.—Porridge. Creamed Eggs. Bacon. Cold Tongue. Fruit.

It is not necessary, of course, for the mistress to write directions as to the stock to be used for this or that soup, etc. These details I have added for the use of the inexperienced reader.

When a dish is queried it means that the cook must use her own discretion as to whether there is enough chicken, or whatever it may be, or if she must substitute some other *plat*.

The object of ordering in this fashion is that it saves the time of both mistress and cook, the tradesmen's orders can be given in advance, and the cook can arrange her work to the best

advantage. The butcher should have his orders weekly, if possible, and the fish order will probably be sent by post or rail, the keeper of the poultry yard can be warned of what will be needed from his department also, and so muddle and fluster is discouraged throughout the establishment. In a town household I have practised this method with success also, and recommend it to any busy woman, while I have never yet known a cook who did not appreciate it when once she had given it a trial.

In towns, because the shops are so near, cooks are far too liable to leave everything to the last minute, and the mistresses' telephone bell and the unfortunate tradesmen's boys and horses suffer greatly in consequence, or the time of the kitchen underling is wasted in "just running out" to get something which should have been ordered the day before.

In houses where the cook is inexperienced, and food is bought in far smaller quantities, the daily visit to the kitchen becomes necessary partly because the mistress must see that the premises are kept clean each day, and partly because the cook may not realise how to make the best of the "pieces."

Half the secret of catering well on a small

allowance lies in knowing how to use pieces, and of taking advantage from day to day of fluctuations in price, which latter cannot be done in the same way when standing orders must be given.

Even in tiny households, however, the mistress may do much to lighten the labour of the cook, and to save expense both of coal and material by planning her bills of fare with care, and showing her cook how she may prepare in one morning various items which will come in during the next two days, when perhaps there will be less time to spare for culinary efforts owing to the necessity for turning out a room, cleaning the kitchen, or washing.

The example given is that of a good-sized country house ; but in town it is possible to shop personally and take advantage of the state of the market. Even so, three housekeeping and two shopping days should suffice. Perishable odds and ends can be bought when going out on other business.

These methodical methods answer well in several small households known to me, where the mistresses are women busy over social work, or who have professions.

One clever manager sends me the following letter :—

## Cooking in Advance.—An Interesting Letter.

“ In these days, when so many women are managing with a smaller domestic staff than usual, and often doing much of the actual work themselves, they might try the experiment with advantage of ‘cooking mornings,’ a plan already mentioned several times by you. It is a method which makes for efficiency and better results with less work.

“ In the first place, to give up the whole of Friday morning and a couple of hours on Tuesday to the preparation of food alone, means that one has not to leave the housework or sewing on other days to mix one odd dish or so, thereby effecting a certain saving of time ; secondly, much less fuel is used than would have been required to heat the stove for the same number of dishes prepared separately ; thirdly, the labour of washing up and cleaning culinary utensils is much reduced. A really good manager can always plan the meals well for several days ahead, so if provisions and stores are ordered in beforehand, that again is far better than constant daily marketing for small supplies.

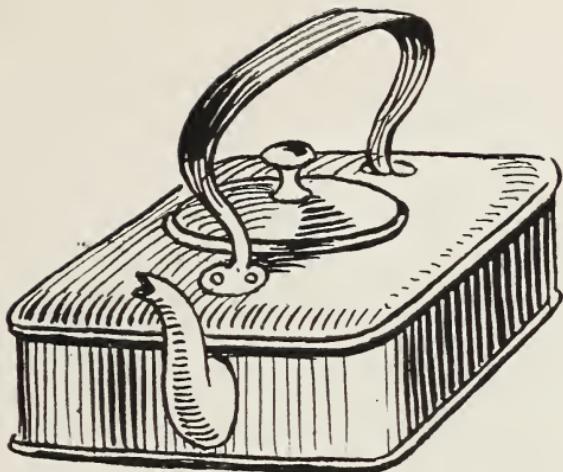
“ My personal plan, which answers very well, is to sketch out menus roughly, order meat, etc., on

Thursday, and prepare *so far as I can* on Friday, something after this fashion.

“ The range, being well heated, will cook both in the oven and on the top as fast as I can get things ready, and I can usually make two sorts of soup (two meals’ supply in each), a milk soup for immediate use, and a vegetable, lentil, or haricot purée which will keep a day or two ; then any remains of meat, game, or ham are minced and used to stuff tomatoes, onions, or potatoes, and put aside for breakfast or lunch dishes ; fish is flaked and made into rissoles or a pie ; beef steak or shin of beef, cutlets or rabbit or a pigeon can be prepared and cooked *en casserole* ready for reheating when required ; a cold dish for Sunday supper, which will come in also for breakfast or lunch, such as a small meat mould, or a beef galantine is prepared ; next, a batch of scones, which keep well in a tin, and some rock cakes or a plain ginger loaf or sultana cake (for present use), and either a good chocolate or cherry cake or some little fancy ‘petits fours,’ which will be ready in case of emergency, and, if not required earlier, will be just as good towards the end of the week.

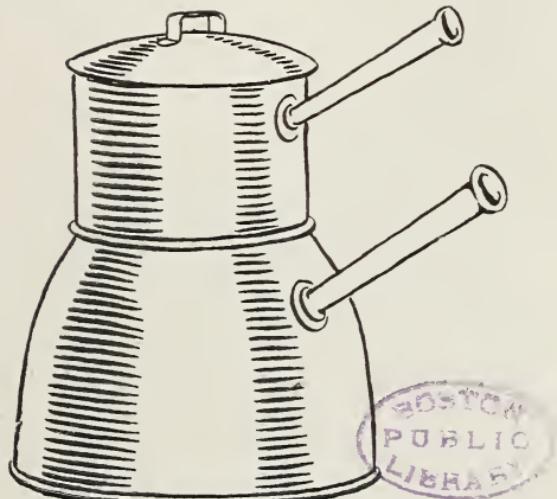
“ Sweets are the next thing, and usually four or five are arranged for. A good batch of pastry

PLATE XXX



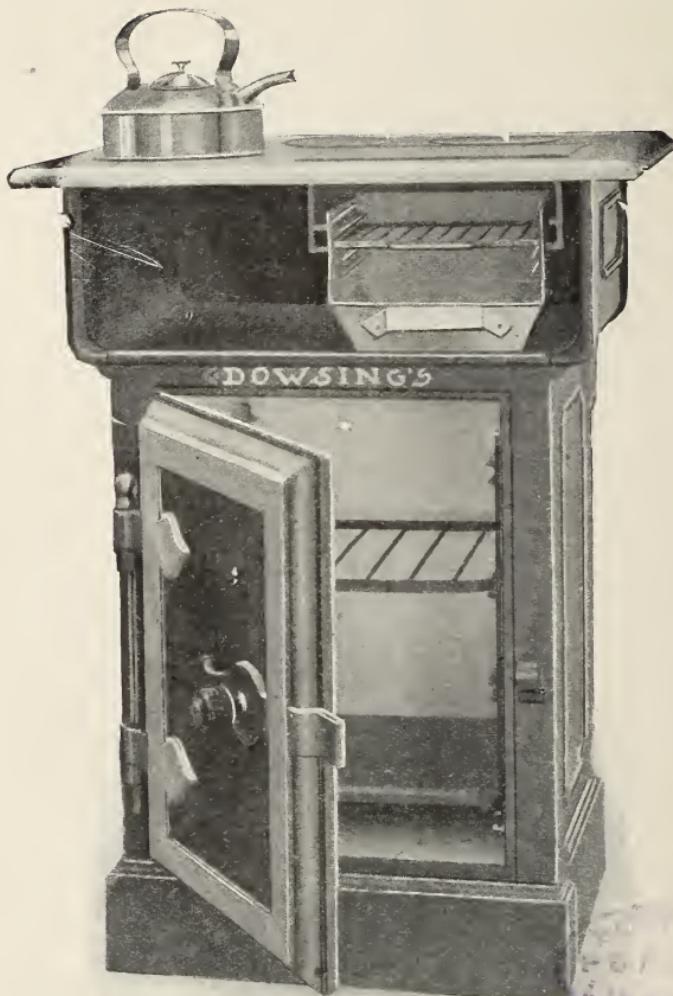
SQUARE AND SHALLOW KETTLE, WHICH EXPOSES  
A LARGE SURFACE TO THE GAS, BOILS QUICKLY  
AND SAVES MONEY

PLATE XXXa

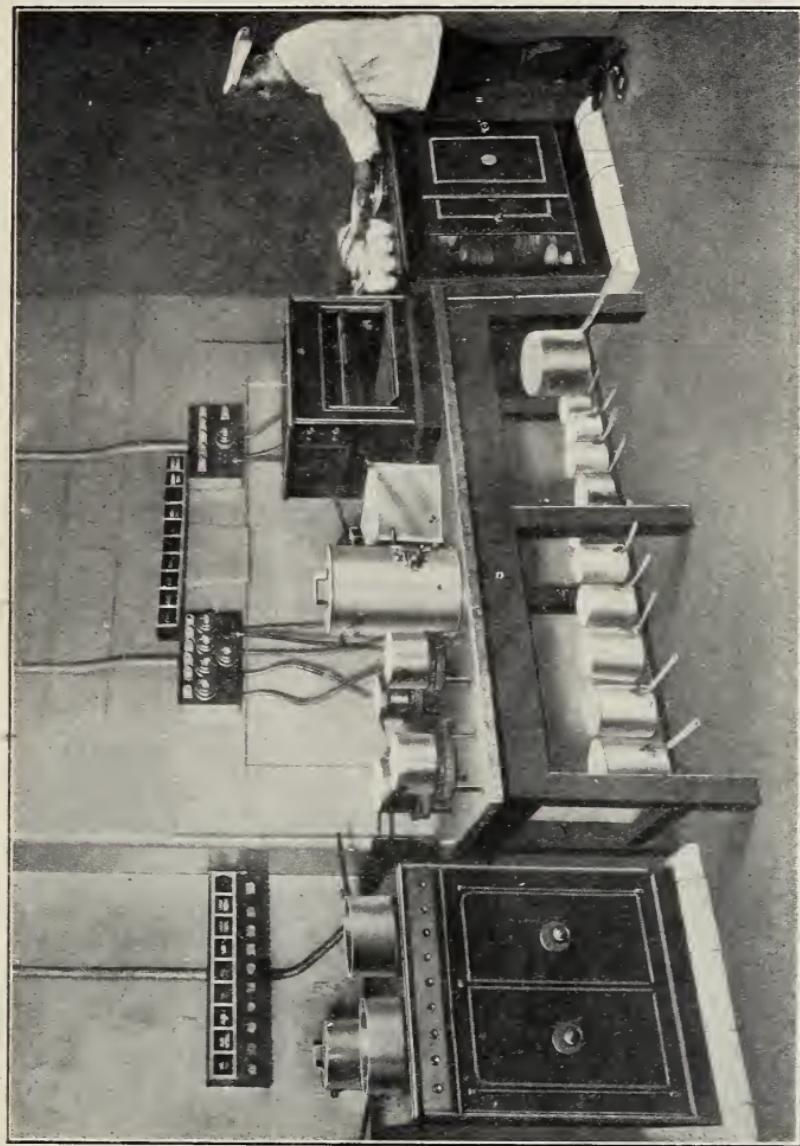


A SINGLE STEAMER—TWO DISHES COOKING—  
ONLY ONE GAS RING BURNING

PLATE XXXI

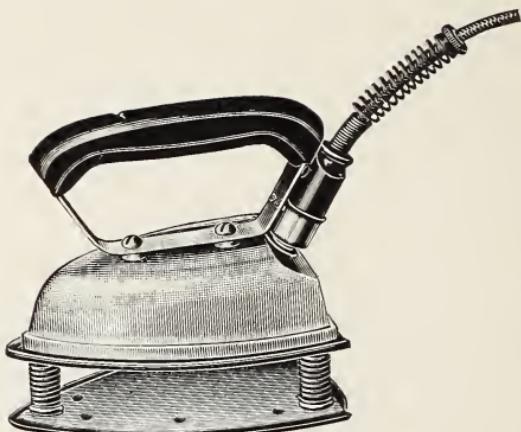


AN OVEN WITH HOT PLATE AND GRILL.  
(The Dowsing Radiant Heat Co.)



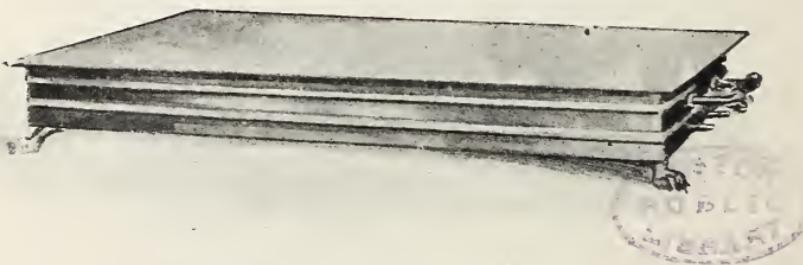
AN ELECTRIC KITCHEN IN A CITY INSTITUTION. (Messrs. Crompton & Co.)

PLATE XXXIII



THE ELECTRIC IRON (NEVER BECOMES DIRTY)  
(The Brompton and Kensington Accessories)

PLATE XXXIIIa



AN ELECTRIC HEATER FOR THE SIDE TABLE  
(T. & Dowling Radiant Heat Co.)

may be made, say a fruit tart, one or two fancy ones, such as Bakewell, treacle, or custard, some little jam puffs or lemon cheesecakes or 'maids-of-honour,' which keep splendidly; in this case a meat pie (steak and kidney, rabbit, or veal and ham) would be made instead of the cold meat dish. On alternate weeks, or if pastry is not wished for, the sweets take some such form as a Swiss roll, a batch of castle puddings, French pancakes (all of which will keep in the invaluable air-tight tin), with a rice meringue or rice, cream and fruit for Saturday, and a boiled suet pudding of some sort (ginger, treacle, or lemon), or a steamed sponge pudding for Friday's dinner.

"Now work this out and see what a well-supplied larder you can rejoice over, and how little cooking you have to do the next three days. Then when Tuesday comes, utilise any remains of Sunday's joint, make another simple sweet or two, some cheese straws, or savoury eggs; develop more soup out of the stock which will by now have accumulated, and with a fresh batch of scones, and perhaps some stewed fruit, you may count on two more days clear for the many other tasks which fall to a good housekeeper's lot, and also for the most necessary free time for rest and recreation.

Moreover, still another advantage of this 'look-ahead' plan is the ease of mind which the knowledge of your well-filled shelves will give you in the case of an unexpected visitor, or any other of those unlooked-for emergencies which will arise even in the best-regulated and most business-like households."

Because everyone else does it scarcely seems a  
reason why you must do it.



## II

## The Late-Dinner Bogey.

“ For a long time it was the late-dinner bogey which caused us to keep more servants than we needed, and to live expensively and rather uncomfortably.

“ At last my husband’s dislike of cooks became so passionate (and not without reason), that I determined to change my household arrangements, arguing that we could scarcely have worse food than we were having already. My husband, I must explain, is one of those men who cannot eat a heavy lunch and work after it, so he needs a hot and substantial dinner. How was this to be arranged with only one servant who went out twice a week, and a wife who only wished to cook in the morning ?

“ Well, we managed thus. We bought a neat electrical heater for the dining-room, and put the hot dishes ready on it and all the cold things on the sideboard. Then when dinner was announced, the maid waited, and as she never had to leave the room, she managed well, even when we had friends to dinner.

“ After all, in restaurants food is not cooked just for you, it is prepared and finished or kept hot in hot cupboards or on hot plates. Managing as we now do our hot food is always hot, and the saving in wages, upkeep and food considerable. On Sunday night we have supper with hot soup, and on the other nights I choose such a menu as soup, stewed oxtail with carrot and turnip, potato cake, cold sweet or cheese, celery, etc. Coffee (if we need it) we make in an apparatus in the dining-room.

“ Of course, we had to have a labour-saving house, otherwise I could not have done the work with one servant and a nurse.”

The writer of this letter uses an electric heater, but in a “ gas house ” the “ Utility ” gas ring with hot plate would take its place.

An illustrated booklet and price list of this excellent contrivance may be obtained from the Gas, Light and Coke Company, Horseferry Road, S.W.

#### A Letter from a Professional Woman who does her own House-Work.

“ In reply to your letter, I will describe my domestic methods. You can testify, can you not, that my little flat is well-kept and that the meals are nicely served ?

“ As you know, the flat consists of sitting-room, bedroom, bathroom, tiny kitchen, linen cupboard and box cupboard, and a cupboard in which I keep all cleaning utensils.

“ In the bathroom is a fitted basin, so I have not even a washstand in my bedroom. The kitchen sink and bathroom are served by one gas geyser, and I have gas fires and a gas cooker. I should like a coal fire in the drawing-room, but it would make too much work. There is electric light.

“ There is an ‘in’ and ‘out’ indicator in the hall, and a little box under it for my cards and notes.

“ My floors throughout the flat are covered with a soft, streaked, green linoleum (not the plain, as that shows every mark). My dining-room table (just large enough for four) is round, and folds flat against the wall in the hall when not in use. I have rugs which I can go over with my Bissel sweeper, or with my **Good Housewife** suction cleaner. I use the latter for the chairs, sofa, mattresses, and curtains. The linoleum I dust and polish with long-handled mops, and as I object to crawling about on hands and knees, I have a special long-handled mop and pail with wringer attached for washing floors and a long-handled scrubber for the kitchen

and hall. But when you do your own housework, and have no coal, it is wonderful how clean things keep. My knives are stainless steel and need no polishing. I have glass rather than silver, and fireproof china ware in which I cook and serve the food. I have no polished metal, and I use newspapers for most purposes for which other people use cloths. I never dry plates and cups, but just put them in a rack to dry.

“ My rooms are rather empty, but what is in them is really good.

“ My day is arranged thus. Foreign-fashion breakfast, put ready over night on a tray (covered), with coffee and milk ready mixed. This I heat. I light the geyser, and while the water heats have my breakfast in bed. In cold weather I can switch on my bedroom fire from my bed, and as my gas-ring has a long tube, heat my coffee without getting out of bed if I please.

“ After breakfast I get up and put on an overall instead of my dress. With no fires and no wash-stand work and my long-handled cleaners the work is quickly done. I prepare what I need for lunch and dinner ; food is so simple a matter when you live alone : my lunch, for example, is generally milk pudding, cheese and fruit, and my dinner of

two courses, meat or fish and sweet or cheese, and often I buy cooked food if I am very busy.

“ I work from eleven until three or four. Then I go out and generally have tea with friends or at my club.

“ I come in, dine, tidy up, put breakfast ready, and often work for an hour or two, or read, and go to bed.

“ I give up Friday to special turning out and cleaning, mending, etc.

“ My entertaining consists of tea or dinner (not more than four). Then I have a waitress who clears away and washes up. For such dinners I have soup, fish au gratin, stewed pigeons with savoury rice, or chicken en casserole, potato croquettes, cold sweet, cheese, coffee, dessert. The kind of dinner which can all be put ready for the waitress down to the last detail.

“ I should detest to exist in a squalid muddle, but really it is not necessary to do so. Living as I do I can save money. If I kept a servant I should spend all I earn and be no more comfortable.”

### About Washing Up.

“ I wonder if ladies who do their own work realise that it is possible to wash up and still keep one's

hands nice by using rubber gloves and different sized mops. When I began to do my own work for a family of husband and four children I had great trouble with my nails splitting. Now my hands are as nice as ever they were. I have three mops of different sizes, one with a brush on the back for hard rubbing. I wear a rubber glove on my left hand (they cost 1s. 3d. a pair, and I have had one pair for months) and use the water practically boiling, as one can tilt up plates, etc., out of the water with the mop, and plates slipped into a rack will then require no drying. My saucepan brush has a long handle and the wire bristles are put in on the slant. I can wash up after any meal without wetting one finger. I have an old skewer stuck in the woodwork beside the sink, and on to it I slip the glove to dry between washings up. I have found it a great saving of time and trouble, too, to have long-handled sweeping brushes, and I have ordered a long-handled hard scrubbing brush, mop, and wringer, so that I can do the scullery and kitchen, etc., without getting down on my knees or putting my hands in water.”

“ The higher a woman’s education, the better housewife she ought to be. When Molière was so hard on learned women, he was not making fun of erudition, but of the affectation of erudition, which relegated into a corner all homely virtues.”

“ First Aid to the Servantless,”

By Mrs. J. G. FRASER.

## CHAPTER VIII

### WHAT THIS CHAPTER IS ABOUT

*Counting the Cost—The Cost of Service as well as of Material—Coke Furnaces—Radiators—How to Light and Stoke a Coke Furnace—Rubbish Burning—Some Figures—Two Examples of Houses in which Coke Furnaces are used—A Maisonette in which a Gas Circulator is used—Taking Advice—Gas for Water Heating and for Lighting—Gas Fires—The Gas Cooker and how to use it—The Cost of Gas Cooking—Cooking Utensils—Cleaning—Rubbish Destructors—Slot Meters—Reading the Meter.*

## CHAPTER VIII

### COAL, COKE, AND GAS: HOW TO USE THEM TO THE BEST ADVANTAGE

#### I

OF all labour-saving forces at present available, I think we must regard electricity and gas as the most important.

Often, however, it is not for us to choose which we will employ. We must needs use gas if electric current is not available, and we must count the cost of both before deciding whether or no we may employ either.

#### Counting the Cost.

Counting the cost is not so simple a matter as it seems, for it does not suffice to ascertain the price of gas per 1000 feet, and of electricity per unit, and of coal and coke per ton, and of wood per 100 bundles, because you have also to ascertain what you can save in labour and in other items before you can arrive at any just conclusion.

Let us suppose that you decide to build a house and warm it by hot water, to light it and to cook

by gas or electricity. In that case you could save the cost of grates, chimneys, the kitchen range, fenders, fireirons, coal boxes, chimney sweeping, a considerable amount of cleaning, and the labour of the people who would be needed to handle the coal and do the cleaning.

So you must consider the matter carefully, not forgetting that it is further complicated by the fact that you may find it difficult to obtain servants, and that it might pay you to use gas or electricity even though coal was cheaper, because of the scarcity and high cost of labour. You have also to consider that the cost of coal, gas, and electricity depend to some extent on the people who use them. One cook, for example, will burn nearly double the coal burned by another and obtain no better result. It is the same with gas and electric current.

### The Coke Furnace.

Now, taking into account the fact that no water company has yet been sufficiently enterprising to provide a supply of hot water, I think the cheapest and most labour-saving method of warming houses and providing hot water is by means of a coke furnace or possibly two furnaces. These should heat all the radiators and supply all hot water.

My personal experience of a coke furnace is that it needs but little attention, and that coke is light, clean, and easy to handle as compared with coal. These furnaces do, however, need some coal to light them. The procedure is as follows:—

### How to Light a Coke Furnace.

First thing in the morning, rake out the furnace and keep the clinker (burnt coke). Put in paper, some sticks, and a shovelful of coal. Light. When burning up add some fresh coke. When well alight, and the water hot, add more coke mixed with clinkers. If the water is quite cold it takes some fifty minutes to get it really hot, though a warm bath would be ready in thirty minutes. If, however, the furnace is banked at night, the water would still be warm at 6.30 in the morning.

In my own house, we need three hot baths before the 8.30 breakfast, and the furnace must be lighted by 6.30 to 6.40 to obtain them. If the cook comes down late she uses more coal to get the furnace burning quickly. After breakfast the cook feeds the furnace with a little more coke, the rubbish and some more coke on top. Rubbish should not be put in unless the fire is fairly hot. The furnace heats a large radiator, water for two bathrooms,

two sinks, and three hand-basins. In winter, the furnace is banked up after lunch, and not made up again until before dinner, and the supply of hot water is constant, and there can be hot baths at night if needed ; but if all the hot water is run off at night and the furnace is not made up again it naturally takes longer to heat the water in the morning. In summer the furnace is let out after the rubbish is burned ; and with a small household the water for washing up is heated on the gas.

One cook who came down late used far too much coal to light the furnace (which is bad for it, as it fouls the flue with soot), threw away all clinkers, and would not burn rubbish, and therefore consumed quite one-third more coke than the present cook, and obtained no better result.

Still, all things considered, I know no better or more economical method of heating the rooms and providing hot water in a household of any size than the coke furnace. This I should not say were gas and electricity cheaper, because, of course, a water heater which is set going by turning a tap or switch is obviously more labour-saving than a furnace.

In almost all households gas or electric heaters are practical, because if used carefully they are not too expensive, and in small houses or flats where

PLATE XXXIV



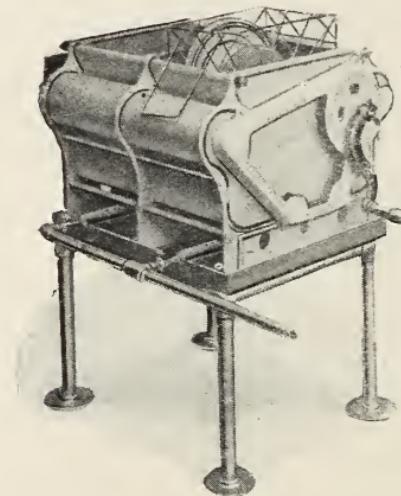
ELECTRICAL KITCHEN OF A SMALL FLAT. ALL LIFTING AND STOOPING IS AVOIDED  
(The British Electric Transformer Co.)

PLATE XXVI<sup>r</sup>



A DINING-ROOM HOT PLATE. (MESSRS. TOWNSHENDS, LTD.)

PLATE XXVI<sup>a</sup>



THE "DREADNAUGHT" WASHING-UP  
MACHINE

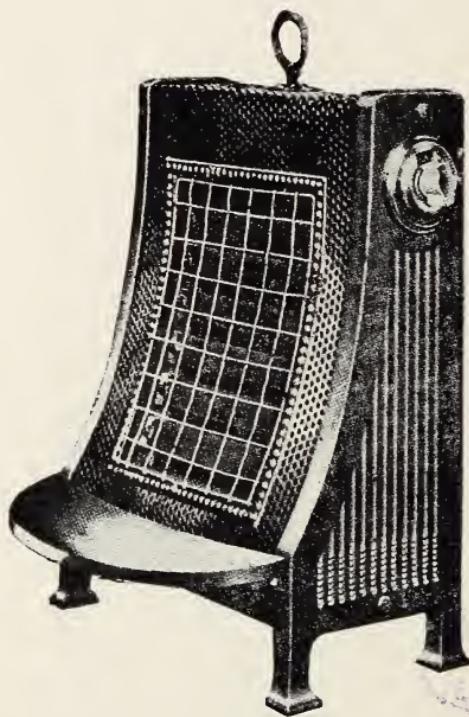
Which may be worked by hand or by electricity. It is made in various sizes and obviates the necessity of putting the hands into greasy water or of wiping the plates, cups, etc. Silver may be washed in addition to china in the machine

*PLATE XXXVI*



AN ELECTRIC COOKER SUITABLE FOR  
ORDINARY USE  
Oven, grill and toaster plate, warmer and  
hot plate. (Messrs. Crompton & Co.)

PLATE XXXVII



A GOOD TYPE OF ELECTRIC FIRE  
(Messrs. Crompton and Co.)

the mistress is her own maid, or depends upon help from a visiting worker, I should certainly recommend the abolition of either coke or coal from the labour-saving point of view alone.

### Some Figures.

I find that in the two years we have used the furnace we have consumed 120 sacks of coke, but part of it was mixed with the coal burned in the drawing-room. I must also admit that during part of this time the fuel was carelessly used. In addition to the coke burned in the furnace, coal was needed for lighting it. We used nine tons of coal in two years, for the drawing-room fire (a large old-fashioned, extravagant grate) and for the furnace. These were partly war years, and coal cost on an average 35s. a ton, and the coke 1s. 2d. a sack; roughly £11 10s. for furnace and drawing-room fire per year. In addition, the gas bills for two years have been, for cooker and five fires (one of the latter lighted in dining-room for about three hours a day, another burned a good deal in Christmas holidays, fire in servants' hall used in the afternoon in cold weather, and two bedroom fires only for an hour or two in the evening

when *very* cold, except during a three-weeks' illness, and one or two days when people had colds), about £40. Gas is at the war price (in London) 8s. per 1,000 feet, and (for "war reasons") inferior in quality to what it was before the war, and the figure includes meter and stove rent (two stoves, kitchen, and servants' hall).

When considering these sums it must be remembered that this is a small London house, and that the furnace in the kitchen heats that and keeps the smoking-room above from ever being very cold. The large radiator in the hall, heated from the furnace, makes an enormous difference to the warmth of the house; also the drawing-room fire was not lighted in the morning except in really cold weather. To the coal, coke, and gas bills must be added 14s. worth of wood during the two years. Old boxes were chopped up, so that if all the wood had been bought it might have amounted to 18s. or £1, say £32 10 0 for a year's fuel.

Had we used a coal range and coal fires and had no radiator, I calculate that the cost of coal would amount to at least £35, and that we should have used more wood, and certainly we could not have run the house without more help.

When counting the cost of heating, lighting, and

cooking, allow for expert's figures. The average servant, and for that matter, the average mistress, is not an expert, and until she is, will not be able to obtain the best value for the money spent as does the expert.

In another household known to me, the furnace is larger and more coke is used, and it is made up at about **seven** o'clock, at midday, and again at night. This furnace heats water for two bathrooms, three sinks, four hand-basins, and radiators all over the house. The house is always beautifully warm, and only a small fire "for company" is needed in the drawing-room. In this house there is a coal range for cooking, but in hot weather an oil stove is used. The quantities of fuel used are for two years : 13 tons coal, 18 tons coke, 8 tons anthra-cite, 234 gallons of oil.

In a maisonette of three floors, gas is used for cooking and for water heating and nursery ironing ring, and coal for dining-room fire, drawing-room in late afternoon and evening, and nursery when necessary. (Child goes to a kindergarten.) The cost for coal and gas for the year 1915 was £28 10s. In flats where the bathroom is near the furnace less fuel is needed.

In all of the three cases mentioned the labour bill would have had to be increased had coal been in

use everywhere. Furthermore, a gas expert tells me that with more careful use the bills could be reduced; but as one is seldom able to secure the services of experts, allowance must be made for careless usage of fuel when counting the cost.

### The Use of Gas.

Let us deal now with the question of gas, and suppose that the hot water is provided by a gas circulator, that it is, for various reasons, not feasible to put in radiators, and that a gas cooker and gas fires are used.

There are various kinds of circulators, rubbish destructors, cookers and fires, and so great has been the improvement in their mechanism and appearance that I really do not think any objection on the score of health or appearance can be made now to the use of gas. One disadvantage is, possibly, that some of the best and most modern fires and cookers cannot be hired. Still, one does not hire one's fireplaces and coal ranges, so why do we always expect to obtain gas fires and cookers on hire?

Some fires I have lately seen were really attractive, and would not spoil the effect of any room.

Readers of this book who wish to see what can be done for them by means of gas should visit

the showrooms of the various gas companies, and especially those of Messrs. Davis, 60, Oxford Street, W.

### Good Advice.

Before deciding on any special fires, stoves, etc., the customer should ask the gas company to inspect the premises and to give advice as to the best method of dealing with that particular house or flat, because the choice of apparatus must depend on the situation of the boiler, the length of pipes needed, the height of the house, the position of the bathroom, and the kind of grates available.

In some houses it would be out of the question to heat water by gas, in others it would be possible and even economical.

But I regret to have to say that the gas companies do not always seem to have employees capable of giving the best advice. In London, the Gas Light and Coke Company have a clever staff, amongst whom are several ladies known as the Women's Advisory Staff. These ladies are extremely helpful, and when they have talked the matter over with the prospective customer, will call in experts who deal with the questions of cost, of fitting, etc. Two heads are better than one, and therefore I always

advise the would-be gas-user to pick the brains of one of these ladies (who are trained cooks as well as gas experts), as well as those of the male staff.

When the cookers and fires have been installed a lady will then call, free of charge, and demonstrate the use of the various apparatus, and it can also be arranged that the fires, cooker, etc., are inspected and kept in order for a nominal sum per annum.

### Gas for Water Heating.

Regarding the use of gas for water heating, it would be useless for me to go into details, for only an expert who has seen the house can know how best to deal with the matter, and whether to advise the use of geysers, califonts, hydrotherms, etc. ; or whether gas circulators should be ruled out and a coke furnace substituted. Excluding the cost of installation, and under suitable circumstances, it is estimated that a large hot bath costs rather less than twopence, and one less full and not quite so hot, rather more than one penny. The cost must vary a little, as in summer time the temperature of the water before heating is higher than in winter, also the size of baths varies.

When using gas for heating, the baths and fitted basins should not be unnecessarily large, and note

that a square-bottomed bath will need more water to fill it than that which is curved. Do not forget that every pint of hot water costs something to make it hot.

Many improvements have been made in geysers of late, and they are now as fool-proof as any apparatus can be. But when one has to deal with a girl who will turn on the gas in the oven and forget that she has not lighted it, shut the door, and then, when the house reeks of gas, arm herself with a lighted taper and start looking for the escape, it is difficult to estimate against what depth of human folly the gas apparatus must be made immune.

Geysers are now contrived so that the one apparatus will serve several taps, and circulators are fitted with concentric burners, so that when the water is hot the ring is put out and only the small inner burner used.

Thermostats are fixed to reduce automatically the consumption of gas directly the water reaches a certain temperature.

A cut-out system is also applied to existing cylinders and tanks of unnecessarily large size.

When using a gas circulator the gas should be turned out when hot water is not required—a detail which many people forget.

For example, one servant heats the water for baths, washing up and cleaning, then the gas is put out after lunch, and is not lighted again until hot water is wanted at night. Another keeps the gas burning the whole day.

### Gas for Lighting.

When electricity is available, I should not choose gas as an illuminant, but when it must be employed it is now so arranged and shaded that the effect is perfect and the blacking of walls and ceiling reduced to a minimum. It may surprise some of my readers to know that gas can now be fitted so that it is switched on and off from a wall switch in the same fashion as electricity. Incandescent burners make for economy, and now *bijou* burners are to be had suitable for small rooms, offices, etc., which consume less than the large burners. Allowing for gas at 3s. per 1000 feet, one large incandescent burner costs one penny every eight hours, a medium burner one penny for every twelve hours, and a *bijou* one penny for every eighteen hours.

### Gas Fires.

When choosing a gas fire see that there is a duplex burner, so that two or three jets can be turned out, leaving the centre jets burning. When

the room is warm the smaller fire will suffice to keep it so. The best modern fires are noiseless and ventilated beautifully, and, as I have already said, they are really pleasing in appearance.

Nevertheless, I do not advise a gas fire, however good, as an economy in a room which is used for hours at a time. The cost of an average fire is said to be  $1\frac{1}{4}$ d. per hour, counting gas at 3s. per 1000 feet, and it does not pay to burn  $1\frac{1}{4}$ d. worth of gas per hour for fourteen or fifteen hours at a stretch. From the point of view of money-saving it would be cheaper to burn coal.

On the other hand, supposing a gas fire is lighted in a sitting-room in the morning, it can be turned out if the family are out in the afternoon, and not relighted until shortly before they return, for the advantage of gas and electric fires is that they are red-hot practically at once, whereas a coal fire takes time to burn up and become hot, and each time it is lighted it eats wood as well as coal.

Still, say what one will, a coal or wood fire is pleasanter to sit with, and for that reason, unless I were quite servantless, I would have one "live" fire in the house. Expert advice must be obtained when putting in gas fires in order to be sure that

the kind most suitable is obtained, and the ventilation must be carefully attended to.

People often say, "Oh, I couldn't sit in a room with a gas fire," having no experience of a well-made, well-ventilated, and properly fitted fire.

There are old-fashioned, badly fitted gas fires which deserve every evil thing which can be said of them; but again there are many others: there is even a fire which can be set alight by turning a switch at your bedside, so that you do not set foot out of that warm refuge until the temperature of the room has become pleasant to your lightly clad form.

### Gas Cookers.

When choosing a gas cooker there are many points to consider, and I own that to my mind the ideal cooker has not yet been put upon the market. It is, however, bound to come, and gas cookers, unlike ranges, are easily changed.

The cooker should have a solid hot plate,\* and not an open top, but if this make cannot be obtained, a sheet of iron covering two-thirds of the top of the cooker can be laid on it. One gas burner will heat this, and several pans will simmer on it at the cost of one burner.

\* See note on p. 155.

The ordinary cooker is generally fitted with one simmering burner and about three boiling burners, which is wrong, for to one dish which needs boiling for more than a few minutes, at all events, many need to simmer.\* The great fault of English cooks is that they cook everything too fast, and the average gas stove does not discourage this naughty practice.

Still, this difficulty can be overcome by using the makeshift hot-plate as already described.

In addition to the boiling burners there should be a griller, which is used for browning and toasting, as well as grilling.

The size of the cooker must depend upon the amount of cooking needed, but it is no economy to have a very small one, because when the oven is in use it should be employed for almost everything. The average cook bakes a milk pudding in the oven

\* When discussing this matter with a great gas expert I find that his opinion is contrary to mine.

"I strongly disagree. The system is wasteful and unsatisfactory," were his words.

With regard to simmering taps, he also holds a contrary opinion.

"I again disagree. You can easily turn down a boiling burner to simmering point, but you can't turn up a simmering burner to boiling point," he objected.

True, but to me that is the advantage of the simmering burner, for it seems to me that nothing short of a burner which refuses to give out more than a certain degree of heat will deter the English cook from cooking too quickly and by too fierce a heat.

—D. C. P.

and cooks vegetables and hashed mutton and stewed fruit each on a boiling tap, and probably uses the griller as well, and wonders why the gas bills are so high.

**Which will you spend, brains or money ?**



## II

When planning out the bills of fare the cook must use more brains and less gas.

For instance, let us say that she wants to serve hashed mutton (and Heaven help that it may not be that grey and slimy mass endured in too many an English home !), potatoes, Brussels-sprouts, milk pudding, and stewed fruit.

Let her heat the oven and cook the mutton in a casserole. The potatoes and sprouts can cook in the oven just as well as over a boiling tap, the milk pudding is baked, and the fruit baked in a covered casserole. Managing thus, all the dishes are cooked in the oven.

Then there will come a day when the oven need not be used at all, and the meal be cooked on the top of the stove. After all, cooking is carried out by heat, and it matters little in most cases if the heat surrounds the pan as in the oven, or is kept directly under it as by a tap.

Every oven should be supplied with a solid browning shelf, not a thing with holes in it. This

can be placed where needed, and by its use the part of the oven above it can be kept 100 degrees cooler than that which is below.

### The Cost of Cooking by Gas.

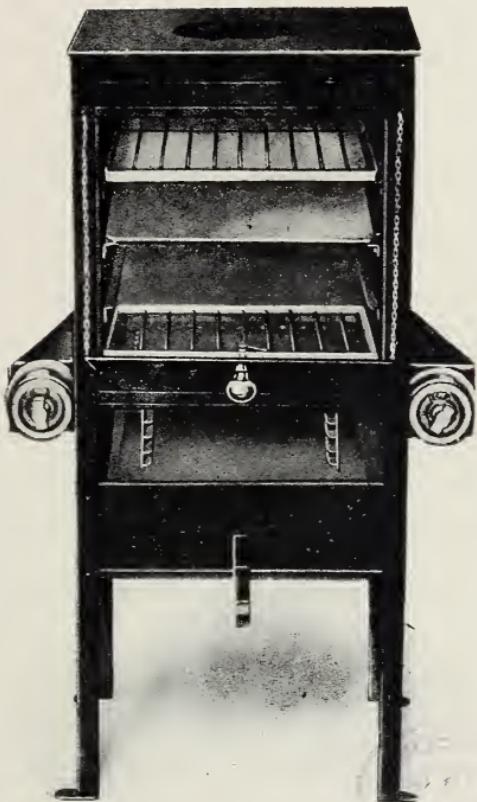
A moderate-sized oven, such as would be needed in a household of not over eight persons, burns about 30 feet of gas per hour when full on. Of that, 10 feet will be required to heat the oven, allowing twenty minutes for that operation. Then the gas should be turned down so that it burns at the rate of 15 feet per hour. Ten minutes later it is turned down again and consumes 10 feet. Thus if you use the oven for one and a half hours it should consume  $22\frac{1}{2}$  feet of gas.

In the oven you should find two open grid shelves, a solid shelf, and a drip tin. The drip tin must be kept at the bottom of the stove below the gas flames. The dripping falls into this and does not become brown as it would do if the tin was placed over the flames. The drip tin must be kept in its place, as otherwise too much air would enter from beneath the oven and stop the cooking.

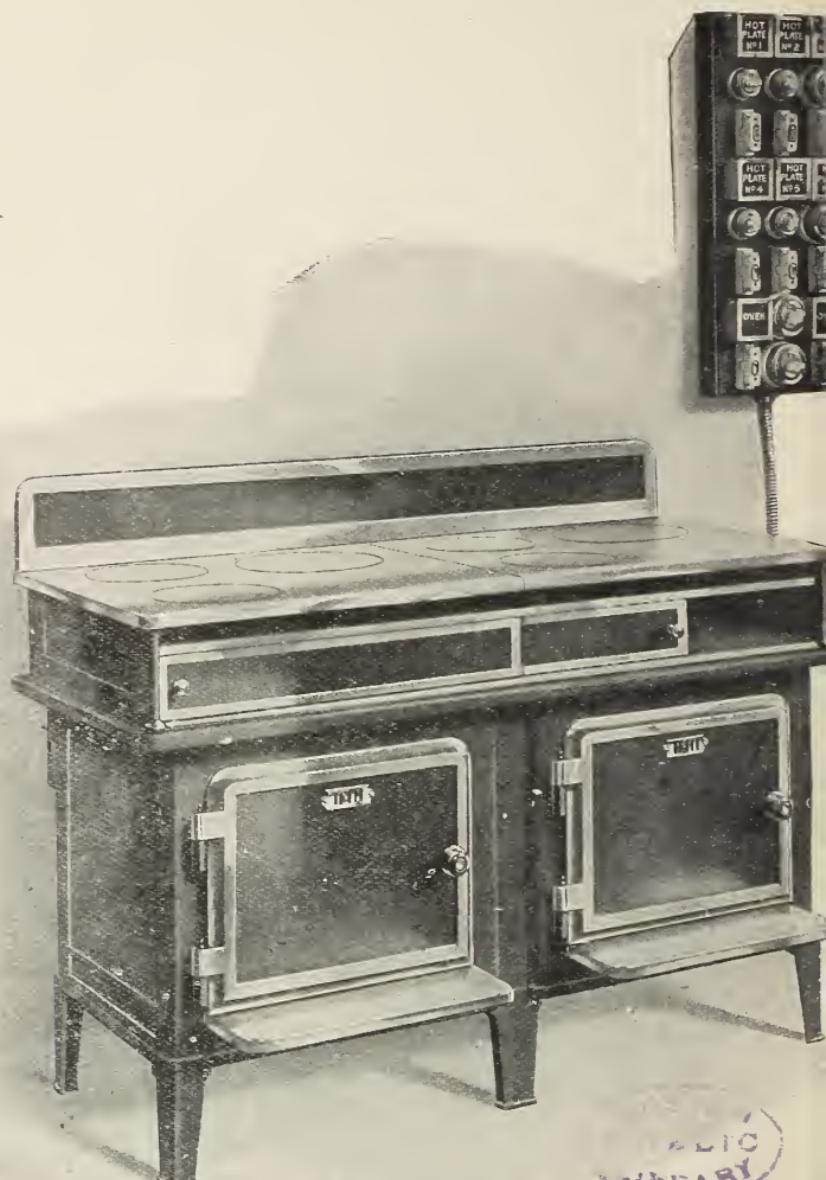
If, instead of hanging the meat from a hook in the oven, it is baked on a tin, use a double baking tin.

When roasting or baking meat, use the upper

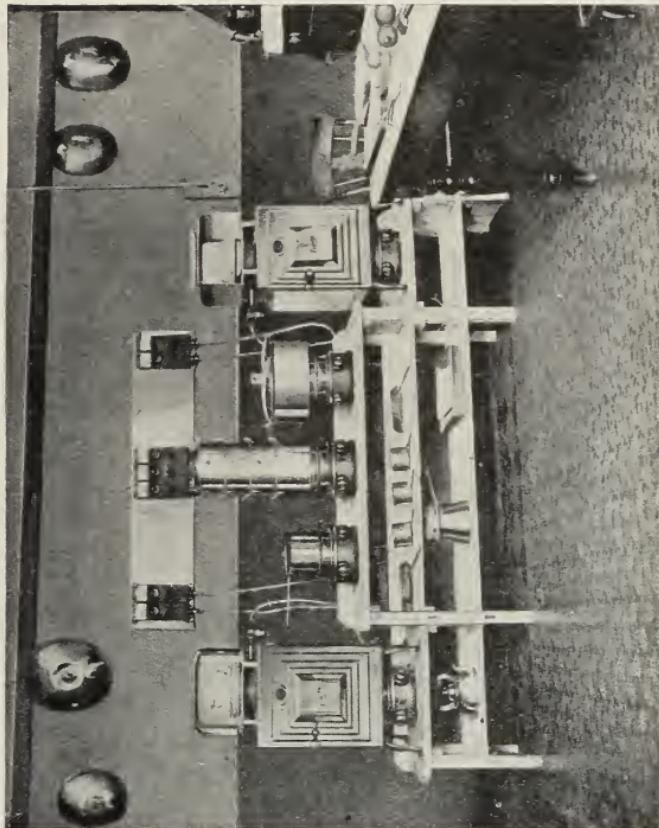
PLATE XXXVIII



AN ELECTRIC COOKER  
(The Jackson Electric Stove Co.)



AN ELECTRIC COOKER (OVENS, HOT-PLATE, GRILL, PLATE HEATER) FOR A LARGE HOUSEHOLD.  
(Messrs. Crompton & Co.)



AN ELECTRIC KITCHEN IN A PRIVATE HOUSE  
which is a red hump, which reminds the cook that  
(The British Electric Transformer Co.)

Above each switch is a red lamp, which reminds the cook that the current is on  
(The British Electric Transformer Co.)

PLATE XL/



THE "BABY FIRE" IN AN ALTERED POSITION IS NOW  
USED TO BOIL A KETTLE AND HEAT AN IRON  
(The British Electric Transformer Co.)

PLATE XLla



THE "BABY FIRE"  
A delightful invention for heating small rooms  
(The British Electric Transformer Co.)

grid shelf for pastry, and place milk pudding or some other food needing slow cooking above the solid shelf, and then make the very best use of your oven while it is hot. See "Cooking Mornings," p. 127.

The temperature of the oven to begin with, for most cakes, should be 280 degrees, for meat 300 degrees, for pastry and bread 340 degrees. An oven thermometer can be procured, and is a great help to inexperienced cooks. Quatern loaves take some three-quarters of an hour to bake, and use about 25 feet of gas.

Large boiling burners, full on, eat about 24 feet of gas per hour. In using boiling burners there is often great waste, as people will turn them full on and have the flames flaring up the sides of the pan, which is a waste of heat and causes a smell of gas. The flame should be kept right underneath the pan or kettle.

The simmering taps consume about 8 feet of gas per hour, and a clever person will, by using a three or four-tier pan, cook several dishes at the cost of about 16 feet of gas per hour, allowing for heating over a boiling tap at first and then simmering for the remainder of the time.

The griller uses as much gas as the oven per hour;

but then, of course, grilling is a quick operation. When using the grill, make it red-hot and see that the grill pan is under, and getting hot at the same time. The grill is used for toasting, and if you turn over the toasted side of bread on to a cold surface, it makes it tough.

When the grill is hot, turn the gas down and watch the toast very carefully, as it cooks very quickly. Always keep a large pan or kettle of water over the griller, as it helps to throw down the heat. Do not boil the kettle on a boiling tap and use the griller for toast, but cook over the griller as well as under it ; and this applies when grilling chops, steak, bacon, sausages, etc., for the saucepans can heat over the griller as well as over a tap.

On a modern stove, the grill is arranged so that half of it may be lighted at a time for grilling small things. When grilling meat or fish, cook with full heat for two minutes in order to seal the pores and conserve the good of the food, then reduce the heat, turn, increase the heat, and decrease again.

Thin steak needs about 12 minutes' cooking ; thicker, 12 to 20 minutes ; chops, 10 to 12 minutes ; cutlets, 6 minutes ; and bacon 1 or 2 minutes.

Pancakes can be cooked by means of the griller first over the grill and then by placing the

pan under it, and omelettes can be made in the same way without turning them.

If the oven is not in use, milk puddings, macaroni cheese, etc., may be cooked on a boiling tap and browned under the griller.

### Utensils for Gas Cookers.

It is most important when cooking by gas to choose the right kind of utensils. They should be thin and wide, rather than deep. A deep kettle takes longer to boil and therefore costs more to boil than a shallow one.

Block tin, enamel ware and earthenware casseroles and fireproof china should be used; the two latter whenever possible, because by cooking and serving in one dish you save labour in washing up and generally have the food served hotter. Also food cooked in earthenware tastes better than that cooked in metal pans.

Both cooker and utensils must be kept clean, for dirt, especially soot, is a non-conductor of heat. They must also be dry. I have seen cooks rinse out a pan and put it on the gas wet, forgetting that heat is then wasted in drying the moisture on the outside of the pan.

In the same way they will boil one quart of water

when they only need a pint, and waste gas in that way.

### To Clean a Gas Stove.

A gas cooker is easily cleaned, and should be well washed with hot water and a little soda, loose parts and oven too. Grease should be rubbed off with newspaper as quickly as possible. The black part of the stove is cleaned with enameline and the bright steel with very fine emery-paper and oil, and then polished with a soft rag, or if plated with a leather only.

The best kind of stove is mounted as high as possible so that it may be cleaned underneath. Also it should be set high to avoid fatigue in bending and lifting when using the oven, but not so high that the cook cannot use the hot plate comfortably.

Be sure that no taps are clogged with grease, and remember that when a gas stove smells it is because it is dirty or because the gas is turned on too full and is not being properly consumed, or gas is escaping. Well-managed gas cookers do not smell.

Now and then something may go wrong outside the cook's control, and then the Gas Company must send some one to put it right.

But when cookers are intelligently used they

seldom need attention, and if it should become necessary to change them, they are moved without much trouble or any structural work or dirt-making.

### The Destruction of Rubbish.

In a household where coal and coke are not used, and in places where the unsanitary habit of collecting refuse but once a week prevails, the careful housewife will ask, what am I to do with the rubbish ? I could burn some of it in a coal range, and most of it in a coke furnace, but if I employ gas only, what is to become of it ?

The only thing then is to add a gas refuse destructor to your apparatus. In one household known to me (a London flat) there is a gas cooker, water circulator, stove for warming the kitchen when the cooker is not in use, and the neatest little rubbish destructor—all fitted into a surprisingly small space.

### Warming the Kitchen.

The mere word "kitchen" suggests warmth, but the mistress who uses gas must not forget that when the cooker is not in use (which may often be from 1.30 to 6 or 6.30 in the evening, except for the boiling of a kettle), and if the circulator is also turned out,

the kitchen would probably be too cold for the maids to sit in. When there is a servants' hall this does not matter ; but if the kitchen is also the sitting-room, a small gas fire should be supplied.

### Slot Meters.

In order to cater for people of small income whom it suits to pay for the gas they consume in small sums, and also in some cases to check the consumption of gas, slot meters have been introduced. No charge is made for the meter, for the piping of the house or for the stove, but in order to cover this more is charged for the gas. It may still be sold at a nominal 3s. per 1000 feet (the price of gas varies in various localities), but the person using a penny-slot meter obtains less gas for a penny than he would do did he not require a meter. The same applies to the " shilling-in-the-slot " meter. Small users, however, often find it convenient to use slot meters, which entails no first cost for installation and no quarterly rentals, and certainly when the housekeeping allowance is small it is better to pay so much a day or a week instead of having to face a quarterly bill ; also the constant production of pennies or shillings does bring home to the person using the gas that it is not just gas

but hard cash which is being used. In some residential hotels and chambers each room is fitted with a slot fire and the bathrooms with slot geysers, so that the guest knows the exact cost of fire and bath, and pays it there and then.

Finally, all gas users should learn to read the meter, a simple task which the lady demonstrator will teach or which can be learned from a card of instructions. Then the meter should be watched. If an increased expenditure of gas is noticed the matter should be inquired into, as there may be an escape, or some one may be forgetting to turn out the fire or lights when they are not needed.



But it is so expensive to fit up a “Labour-Saving House,” you object.

That depends on many circumstances, the length of your lease, for example. Allow for the interest on the capital you spend, and possibly a sinking fund to repay it, and then count what you save in cleaning, in wages, in fuel, etc. Often you will find that you get back the money you have spent in a few years.

## CHAPTER IX

### WHAT THIS CHAPTER IS ABOUT

*Electricity as the Poor Man's Light—Base-  
ment Rate and Checking of Waste—When  
Putting in Electric Light—To Avoid Waste  
of Current—Makes of Lamps—Electric  
Fires—The Electric House—In the Kitchen  
—The Cost of Current—Labour-Saving and  
Comfort-Giving Appliances.*

## CHAPTER IX

### THE ELECTRIC HOUSE. HEATING, COOKING, CLEANING, AND LIGHTING BY ELECTRICITY

#### “The Poor Man’s Light.”

OME five-and-twenty years ago, when six-pence a unit was considered a very low charge for electricity, Colonel Crompton, R.E., C.B., claimed that before many years electricity would be “the poor man’s light”; and if the various supply companies had been developed on the broad lines he advocated, there is no doubt that his prophecy would by now have come true in every town of medium size and in many villages in the area of supply, and we now might have been using electric current to light and warm our houses, to cook by, and to work various labour-saving machines.

As it is, there are very few places where this term can be applied. Still, in nearly every town the charge for current has been considerably reduced, and with the great strides which have been made in

the efficiency of various lamps, it can with certainty be said that electricity is the light for those of small means. As the charge for electricity is reduced, so will it be used on a larger scale for heating and cooking ; but at present the percentage of people using it for cooking is so small when compared with those using it for lighting that I propose to deal first with this latter application of it.

When considering the question of illumination of a house, oil, gas, and electricity are the three possible alternatives ; and when analysed further, bearing in mind always the question of cost of labour and the difficulty of obtaining it, and the cost of cleaning and decorating, it will be found that the most suitable and economical is electricity.

### **Basement Rate and Checking of Waste.**

In many districts special rates are offered where heating or cooking apparatus, or motors for pumping, etc., are used during the daytime, also for basement lights. So when arranging for a supply enquiry should be made as to terms. In the case of basement lights in small houses the saving is nearly all swallowed up in the extra meter rent, but in houses having large basements where it is necessary to use the lights for many hours a day the ad-

visability of going on the special rate is a point well worth inquiring into closely. In spite of the extra hours necessarily burnt by basement lights, there is no doubt that great waste often occurs in the domestic offices—lights are switched on at dusk in passages, kitchen, pantry, and servants' hall, and even when all the servants are having supper in one room every light will be found alight in all the others. It is difficult to guard against this, but if a small notice is fixed to the wall above the switches asking that the light shall be turned off when not in use, it sometimes has the desired effect. These notices can be bought ready printed.

Another source of waste which was never realised until the special constable came into being is in the servants' bedrooms. I am told by a member of that body that one of the things which has struck him more than anything since he took up his lonely patrol is the number of lights which are kept burning all night in the top rooms.

This can be obviated by a master switch controlling the top floor, which can be in charge of one of the head servants. It is not advisable to have this in one of the lower bedrooms, as is sometimes done, as it necessitates the mistress waking up early in winter when lights are needed before

breakfast, and, further, might lead to confusion in the case of a fire or illness in the night.

It is impossible to lay down any definite rules for the lighting of the various rooms, as tastes differ so much as to the amount of light required; but whatever the individual taste may be, the naked lights should be so placed that they cannot be seen. This can be accomplished by well-shaded wall or portable lamps or indirect lighting. This latter form has much to commend it, as it is economical and gives an even distribution of light all over the room.

### When Putting in Electric Light.

It is as well to err on the side of extravagance in the number of wall plugs. When the floor-boards are up it is not a very costly matter to have them put in, and then when the furniture of a room is altered from the position originally assigned to it, as is so often done with a new house, it will not be found that the writing-table or sofa is on the opposite side of the room to the plug to which the lamp required to light it is attached.

The placing of the lights and the careful use of them would do much to lessen the bill for current—a fact proved to me when we let our house one

winter to a family of the same size, who used the same number of rooms as we had used. The bill for light was sent in to us, and thus we discovered that it was just double what ours had been for the same quarter the year before.

I put this down to the fact that basement and passage lights must have been burned when not needed, and that instead of using one or two table lamps when reading and writing in the evening all the wall lights were lighted.

### To Avoid Waste of Current.

The staircase lights should be on two-way switches, so that they can be controlled from each floor—that is to say, from the hall you can switch on the hall and first-floor lights. From the first floor you can switch off the hall and light the second floor, and so on up the house, the reverse process taking place in descending. If the lights are installed in this way it is not necessary to keep all the staircase lights burning, as is done in so many houses; the extra cost of installing is trifling.

In bedrooms where there are two or three lights in addition to a table-lamp at the side of the bed it

is advisable and convenient to have at least one of the lights in a two-way switch.

As regards the candle-power of the various lamps, so much depends on the size and decoration of the room and the individual tastes of the occupiers as regards the standard of illumination that it is impossible to give any useful guide on this subject. Naturally the lowest available candle-power lamps will be fitted in passages, bathrooms, bedroom table-lamps, etc., but the smallest wire-drawn filament lamps will in many cases be found to be more than is necessary. Owing to the construction of these lamps, they have so far not been made lower than 16 candle-power for 200 volts, which is a common pressure in towns, but to compensate for this it must be borne in mind that a 25 c.p. metal filament lamp consumes about the same current as an 8 c.p. carbon filament lamp, and it is undoubtedly only a question of time before lamps of smaller candle-power and taking less current are put on the market.

### Makes of Lamp.

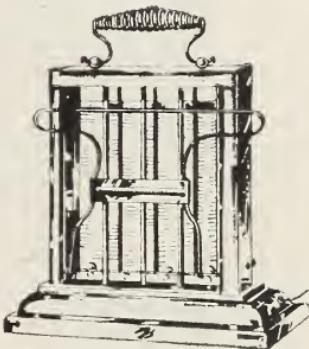
The invention and development of the drawn-wire lamp, made by various firms and sold under trade names such as "Osram," "Mazda," and

PLATE XLII



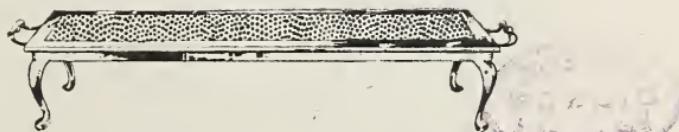
A BREAKFAST COOKER FOR TOASTING,  
GRILLING AND BOILING  
(The British Electric Transformer Co.)

PLATE XLIIa



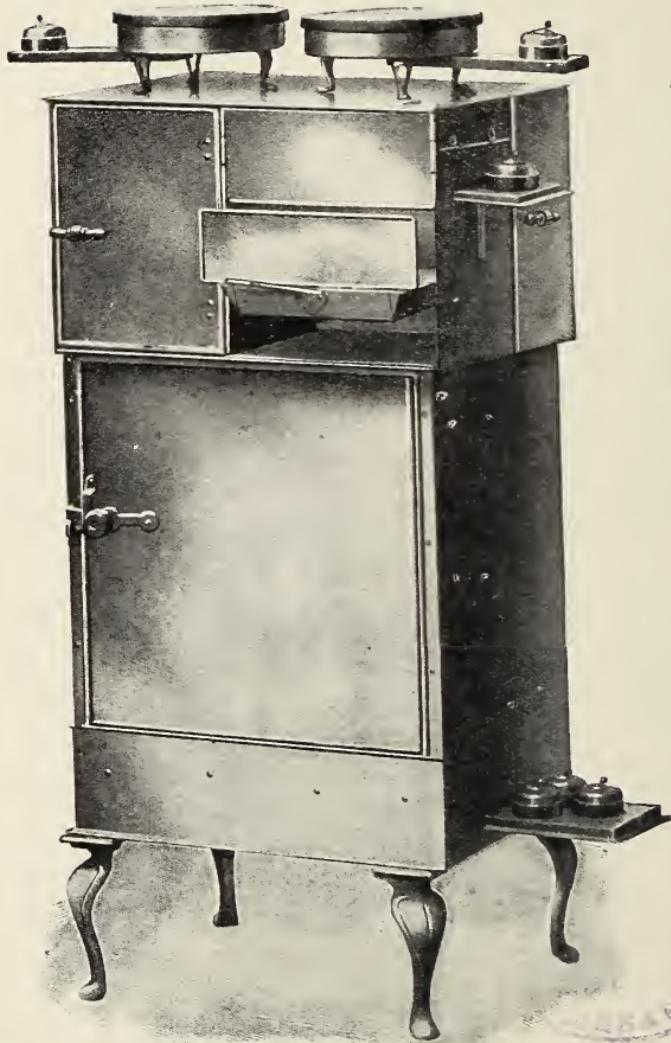
A TOASTER FOR THE BREAKFAST TABLE  
You do not need to ring for more toast but make it  
yourself and eat it while hot and crisp  
(The British Electric Transformer Co.)

PLATE XLIIb



A PRETTY LITTLE ELECTRIC HOT PLATE FOR TABLE USE  
(The British Electric Transformer Co.)

PLATE XLIII



AN ELECTRIC COOKER OF CONVENIENT MAKE SUITABLE  
FOR FAMILY USE  
(Messrs. Townshends, Ltd.)

“Z,” have made a great saving in the annual bill for electric light, and at the same time have raised the standard of illumination. With the carbon filament, a 32 c.p. lamp would burn for seven and a half hours with the expenditure of one unit of electricity. Now the same light can be obtained for twenty-five hours at the same cost with the metal filament lamp. Against this saving must be set the increased cost of the lamps and the fact that higher candle-power lamps are being used, so the saving is not as large as the above figures would indicate. This type of lamp will undoubtedly be further developed, and the time is not far distant when the present consumption will be considerably reduced, so that a combination of lower charges and improved lamps will bring the electric light within the reach of even “the poor man.”

Scarcity of labour and the difficult state of the domestic labour market have made many people look round for labour- and dirt-saving methods of warming and of cooking; and certainly if not as attractive as a coal fire, an electric fire is both convenient and dirt and labour saving; it is likewise a boon in bedrooms and other rooms which need to be heated only for an hour or two at a time.

## Electric Fires.

Various makes of fires are illustrated in this book.

A great advantage of the electric fire is that it is red-hot in a few seconds and may be placed where it is most required.

## The Electric House.

Now let us see how things are done in a house which is worked by electricity throughout. A maid is awakened by an electric alarm (she cannot say that her clock was wrong, because all the clocks are controlled by a master pendulum). She goes downstairs, touches a switch, and sets the hot-water apparatus going. To warm or light a room, to set the cooker to work, needs but a touch. An electric service lift makes the laying and clearing and serving of meals a quick and easy matter. There are no heavy trays and cans and coal boxes to haul about the house upstairs and down. The cleaning of the rooms is eased by the use of electric vacuum cleaners, and when there is no dust and smoke from coal fires the house does not become nearly so dirty.

The breakfast dishes are kept hot on a heater. If more boiling water or more toast is needed, it can be obtained in a moment or two without leaving the dining-room. If you wish to speak

to a servant, you do not ring and wait for her to run up or down stairs, you telephone your instructions.

### In the Kitchen.

Let us descend to the kitchen. In the average kitchen the coal range is placed where it is difficult to see the contents of the pots and pans, and each time the cook wishes to put anything into the oven or take it out she must stoop. To stoop and then lift a weight from oven to table adds considerably to the labour of the day. In the intervals of cooking the fire must be made up, and not only must all the pots and pans be cleaned inside, but the outside becomes black and sooty, and must be scrubbed. Dampers must be pulled in and out, and the cooking of the household and supply of hot water attended to.

In an electrically fitted kitchen what do we see ? A clean, bright-looking oven and a hot plate for boiling and simmering, and probably a grill, completed by a plate heater, all standing on a table placed in a good light and conveniently near the sink. The cook may sit at ease peeling apples and put out a hand to alter the heat of the oven or hot plate, or to move a saucepan. If she is a forgetful

person, a red lamp reminds her of the fact that she has not switched off the current from any portion of the cooking apparatus no longer needed. This is not a fairy story. It is a statement of plain fact, and one into which the public must enquire if it will solve the labour question.

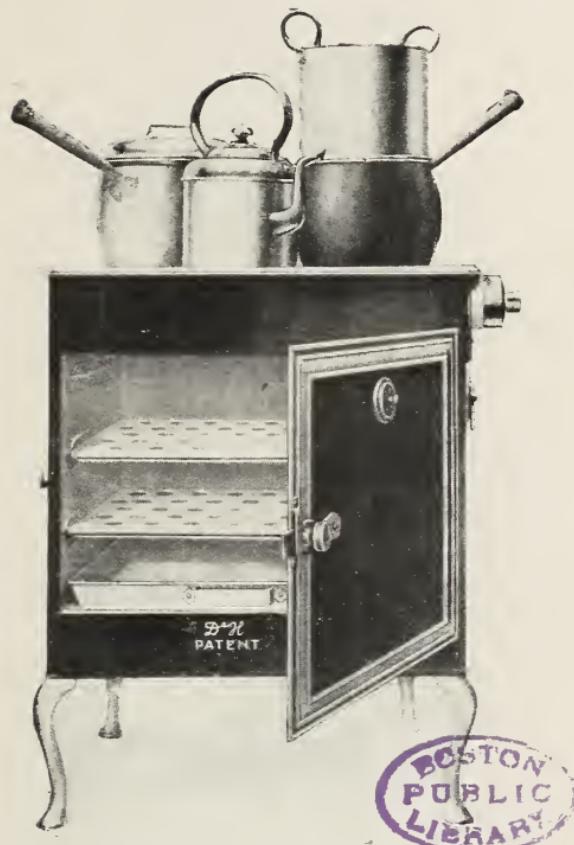
### Simplicity.

That electrical household labour-saving appliances are no longer in the experimental stages, and that now they can be depended upon to work satisfactorily, is shown by the number of schools and restaurants and canteens in which electricity is used.

Yet all the cook has to do is to turn the switches and so obtain different degrees of heat. If she needs a fierce heat, she can secure it in a moment, while if she requires a gentle heat, she can secure that, in either case by turning a switch. If a fuse should go, it is an easy matter to replace it, and the watchful red lamp makes it impossible to leave the current on unawares. No one who has seen an electrically fitted kitchen can doubt that it is labour and dirt saving.

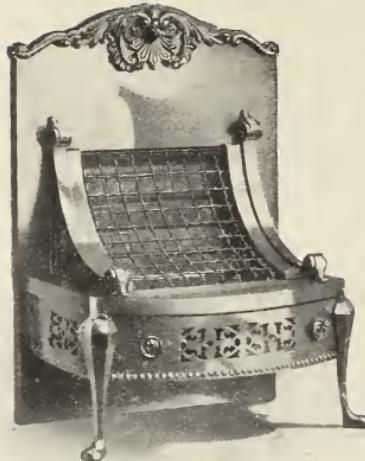
In a school where three cooks were kept, two now do the work with ease, and where a cook and

PLATE XLIV



ELECTRIC OVEN AND HOT PLATE  
(The Dowsing Radiant Heat Co.)

*PLATE XLV*



AN ELECTRIC FIREPLACE SUITABLE  
FOR OPEN HEARTHS  
(Messrs. Crompton & Co.)

*PLATE XLVa*



AN ELECTRIC FIRE

One great advantage about electric fires is that there is no waiting for them "to burn up." They become red hot in a few seconds. (Messrs. Belling & Co.)

kitchen-maid were needed, now that all coal carrying, range cleaning, stooping, and so much dirt have been eliminated, the cook does the work cheerfully and single-handed, except for the help of a woman once a week to clean areas, kitchen stairs, and passage, and to scrub. The cost of a woman one day a week at 2s. 6d. plus 1s. 6d. worth of food amounts to 4s. a week; while a kitchen-maid at as low a wage as £16, with washing, insurance, and food, would not cost less than 18s. a week.

But there is not only the economy of labour and dirt to consider. There is the saving in the food itself.

### The Saving of Meat.

I will confine myself to the question of meat. When roasting with coal the loss of weight on a joint is anything between 25 per cent. and 35 per cent. A really bad cook who gallops the meat and does not baste it can effect a shrinkage of even 50 per cent.; but, fortunately, in this land of bad cooks there are few who sin so deeply as this. Twenty-five per cent., however, is quite a common loss, and even good and careful cooks will account for a 20 per cent. loss. In proof of this weigh the meat before and after cooking.

It is the boast of those who cook by electricity that they reduce this loss to 8 per cent. Even when cooking electrically it would be easy to cause a shrinkage of 10 to 15 per cent. ; while, on the other hand, very clever cooks will bring down the shrinkage to 5 per cent. Allowing, then, to be fair, a loss of 25 per cent. when cooking by coal (that is a quarter) and a loss of 10 per cent. when cooking by electricity, you have a saving of 15 per cent. on your meat bill. Put this at £50 a year, and you have saved £7 10s. on that item alone.

In one case when cooking on a large scale it was found that plates of meat which had cost 5d. could be provided for 4d., a point which the authorities responsible for the running of canteens for troops and munition workers might do well to note.

### The Cost of Current.

We must now consider the question of cost of current, and here we are in many cases up against a difficulty, for unless current can be obtained at a reasonable price the use of electricity in the household is not a paying proposition. Speaking without inside knowledge of the workings of the power companies, it would appear that they are greatly to blame that electricity is not in more general use.

Apparently few of them make any effort to induce their customers to use current for aught but lighting purposes. The offer of a flat rate of 1d. per unit for all domestic purposes, added to an energetic pushing of electrical apparatus and demonstration of its value, would result in an enormous betterment in the conditions of domestic labour and in the purifying of the air of towns.

There are, of course, electric supply companies who are more enterprising—Marylebone, West Ham, and Poplar, for instance, and some provincial town companies. The engineers of these supply companies have formed what is known as the “Point Five” Club, their object being to supply current for heating and cooking at  $\frac{1}{2}$ d. per unit. Still, when Marylebone represents the only district in highly rented residential parts of London willing to do this, I think I am not unjust when I say that the electrical companies are sadly behind the times in their methods.

It is said that the current used for cooking (allowing for late dinner) should be 1 unit per day per person, and that the amount should diminish with the number of persons cooked for, until, when cooking for 100 persons, the saving would be as much as 50 per cent. This, naturally, depends to

some extent upon the cook, who can, if she will, waste current and spoil food by cooking it at too high a temperature ; for, as all cooks know, after the first ten minutes' cooking in a hot oven the meat should be cooked quite gently. Those of my readers who are interested in the question of electrically fitted houses can see the various utensils, stoves, etc., at the showrooms of the makers ; they can attend demonstrations at Tricity House, 48, Oxford Street (the Electrical Restaurant) ; and also add to their knowledge of the subject by the perusal of "Electric Cooking, Heating, and Cleaning," an excellent book, published by Constable and Co., price 3s. 6d. net.

At Tricity House, a most popular restaurant near the Tottenham Court Road end of Oxford Street, all the cooking is done by electricity, and a clever lady demonstrator will show the enquirer exactly how the various apparatus is used.

### Labour-Saving and Comfort-Giving Appliances.

But even when all the cooking is not done by electricity, the would-be labour-saver may avail himself of a large number of labour-saving inventions and comfort-giving inventions in the shape of chafing dishes, kettles, toasters, and dish-heaters.

Examples of these are to be found in all electrical showrooms, and these, even when cheap current is not available, may prove a great convenience and indirectly a saving of money. In one house known to me, where one servant only has been employed since the war, the owner switches on an electric fire, and grills the bacon, and makes toast and coffee in the dining-room, the table being laid and the materials left ready over night, thus saving any breakfast cooking and table-laying at the busiest time in the morning. The table is covered with a wrapper, and the room is swept and dusted later in the day.

Another useful small appliance is the electric fan. In the sick-room it is invaluable, also for clearing a room of the smell of smoke, and being portable it can be carried from room to room and attached to an ordinary wall socket.

For large houses there is a great demand for small domestic motors, and great saving of labour can be effected by using them for driving boot-cleaning machines, washing-up machines, and polishing hobs for brass and silver cleaning.

Before writing these articles I visited kitchens where coal, gas, or electricity were in use, and I have also cooked on coal ranges and gas and electric

cookers. Excellent results may be obtained by all three, but there is no possible doubt that as regards labour and dirt-saving, gas or electricity is preferable to coal. At the same time, as one cannot in many cases use either, it is only fair to say that some of the modern coal ranges do their work admirably, at the least possible consumption of fuel.

As, however, a coal range cannot be regarded as a labour-saving apparatus, I do not give any consideration to them in these pages, which are, as I have already said, devoted, not to ideal homes and dream homes, but to those where the scarcity of labour makes it necessary to save work, and ultimately cost, as much as possible.

### A FINAL WORD

**J**UST as the book was going to press I received this letter—

“ I must tell you how thankful I have been for your labour-saving ideas. My cook left to make munitions ; my housemaid’s fancy led her to become the driver of a tradesman’s cart ; the parlourmaid remained, and still remains, bless her ! I have had to rely on what temporary help I could obtain, for cooks so far turn a deaf ear to my entreaties. Had it not been for our gas fires, circulator, and cooker, our washing-rooms and our lift, Heaven knows what would have become of us.

“ As it is we really have managed extraordinarily well. Most people’s houses are too full of things which no one wants. Most people eat too much and serve the food with unnecessary elaboration, and vast numbers of women spend their lives fussing over trifles and making unnecessary work for vast numbers of other women.

“ Will it be different after the war ?

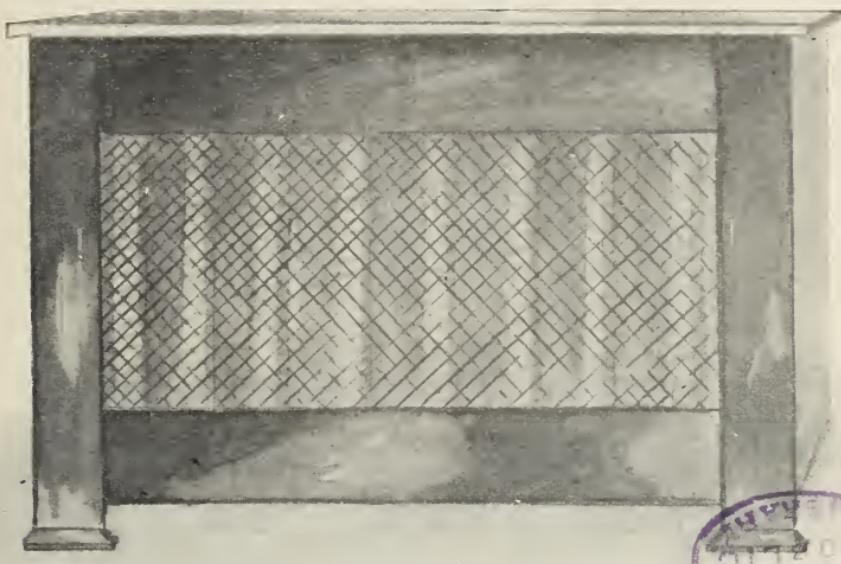
“ Let us hope so.”

The greatest Labour-Saving apparatus we possess is the Brain ; it has not been worn out by too much use.

This statement appears on the first page of this book, and again on the last.

It bears repetition.

PLATE XLVI



AN ELECTRIC RADIATOR  
(The Dowsing R. H. Co.)



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THE QUESTION OF THE MOMENT

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